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THE WOMAN WHO WAITS

BY

FRANCES DONOVAN

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RICHARD G. BADGER
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THE WOMAN WHO WAITS

THE WOMAN WHO WAITS

CHAPTER I

THE WOMAN WHO WAITS

ONE Saturday morning between seven and eight o'clock I took an elevated train at the station of one of our large cities in the Middle West, and rode down to the city to do some shopping. The crowds on the train at this early hour attracted me. The tide, which flows to and fro, from the circumference to the center of the city, was now at flood. I was interested particularly in the women. There were great numbers of them who swarmed into the coaches as fast as the gates could be opened and shut. They were working women, but the privileged class, the aristocrats, the women who labored in the "Loop."

There were women of every physical type; there was the blond girl with the pearl earrings and high-topped laced boots, and the brunette with a bewitching nose veil; there was the tall slender girl in a "strictly tailored suit," and the

short, fat girl in a frilly lace collar; there was the middle-aged woman who, with rouge and an extravagantly short skirt, was making a pitiful attempt to cheat the years, and the woman in rusty black, and flat heelless shoes who had given up the struggle for youth and was boldly and admittedly old.

The first thing that interests one woman in another is the success of the other's efforts at personal charm. Most of these women were young, many of them were undeniably pretty, some even beautiful, while one or two of them, without any of the ordinary physical attractiveness, had somehow acquired that elusive charm which we describe as "interesting."

There are all sorts of people in the ranks of the working women in Chicago. After some experience I have got to know them. There is the high-salaried manager of a fashionable tea room, the private secretary of a prominent lawyer, the office executive, the stenographer, the typist, and the little filing clerk; there is the saleslady, the shop girl, and the bundle wrapper; the masseuse, the chiropodist, the manicurist, and the lady barber; the boot and shoe worker, the garment worker, the glove operator, the bindery woman. All are a part of the great army of women workers that every working day pours itself into that

part of Chicago's downtown district known to every Chicagoan as the "Loop."

Where do they all come from? What sort of homes are they living in? Have they been born in the city or have they drifted here later in life? What has determined their choice of an occupation? Would it not be interesting to have some definite information in regard to some one of these vocational types? These were some of the questions that came to my mind.

It is a significant fact that statistics show that the number of girls in Chicago between the ages of fourteen and twenty-one greatly exceeds the number of boys. Every morning paper records the misfortune of some young girl, who has come to the city in search of adventure. How many thousand are there whose stories we never learn?

Why do they come? Because life is dull in the small town or on the farm and because there is excitement and adventure, in the city. The lure of the stage, of the movie, of the shop, and of the office make of it the definite El Dorado of the woman. It is her frontier and in it she is the pioneer.

A few years ago the United States Department of Agriculture sent out letters to thousands of women who were living on farms inviting them to tell what was wrong with the rural life of women.

They were flooded with answers. These letters gave many reasons why farm life had lost its hold upon the farmer's wife, but back of all was the complaint that life was hard and dull. Is it not possible that many a woman on the farm has directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, encouraged her daughter to seek her fortune in a different and a brighter way?

Another source of supply lies in the second generation of the stockyards and factory workers. They, like the daughters of the farm, are encouraged by their mothers to seek an easier and more attractive method of earning a livelihood. And, because they cannot take with them into this new life, the old world background of custom and tradition that belongs to their parents, they are even more poorly prepared than are the daughters of the American farm for the transition from the old to the new life. Consequently, in entering upon these new contacts, the dangers and losses incurred by them will be even greater than those which will come to the woman who is in some measure prepared by her American standards of living.

It is comparatively easy for these girls to find employment in the great city and it is from them that a great part of this vast industrial army that empties itself into the streets daily is recruited. The employer in the Loop can utilize this cheap

labor most effectively in his well-organized machine.

"Carson Pirie, Scott and Company and Mandel Brothers!" the conductor had sung out as the L slowed down at the Madison Street station.

There was a rush and scramble. The crowd seemed to move bodily towards the door. I was among the rest. Down the stairs of the L platform we rushed and were soon lost in the vast throngs that were hurrying along Wabash Avenue. On Madison Street I stopped and looked in through the huge plate glass windows of a restaurant. I saw waitresses in white caps and aprons walking about.

"Why not find out about the waitress?" I asked myself, and the idea made a strong appeal to me.

I walked on again. I went into several stores on different errands and every time I came out of a store I saw a restaurant and through the windows waitresses moving about at their allotted tasks. That I saw so many was not remarkable when one knows that of the two thousand or more restaurants in Chicago, approximately one-fifth are located in the Loop.

I found myself saying again and again, "Why not find out about the waitress?"

And then suddenly another idea came to me, "Why not be a waitress?"

But first I wanted to know what was already known about the waitress. I searched through the libraries but was unable to find anything except one little pamphlet got out by the Consumers' League of New York City entitled "Behind the Scenes in a Restaurant." This gave statistics of wages and working hours merely, but no real information, no real insight into the situation.

I inquired of the Bureau of Labor in Washington and received the following reply:

"We have not made any special study relative to the wages, hours of labor, or any matters pertaining especially to the work of the waitress, and consequently have nothing along this line to send you."

When I decided to become a waitress, I had no idea of writing a book. I did not at this time imagine that I was going to get anything out of my adventures except an experience. I thought I might get some material for articles that might be of real interest and I thought that I could do this in a short space of time. I had no idea of what I should discover. I did not imagine that I was entering a new world and that I should return with a knowledge of life new and strange to me. I had had no particular desire to make discoveries. I merely wanted to see what other women, not in my world, were doing. I went on and explored until I felt that I had gone a long

way. Then I sat down to try and give an account of what I had seen.

When I first started out to write this matter, I purposed to make it simply a general statement, such as I had read, about the conditions of life in restaurants as I had found them without reference to places where I had worked. I concluded that I would make no real contribution to the subject unless I told the whole story accurately and in detail. I decided that, though I did not know how far my discoveries represented conditions in other cities nor in other restaurants in Chicago where I had not worked, I would make my account faithful and accurate of what I knew to be true, my object being not so much to give information as to present a vivid picture of the life I had known.

I worked for nine months in the restaurants of Chicago, not continuously but steadily, with short intervals between each job. These intervals I employed in writing and reflection. I knew the difficulties of seeing clearly when one looks on from the outside and I wished to make my account as reliable as it was possible for one to make it who has set out to interpret a situation entirely foreign to one's previous understanding of life.

I made many friends in the waitress group, so many in fact that I feel a certain sense of disloyalty in writing down these intimate stories of their lives. A good many portraits will un-

doubtedly be recognized but what I have said will be no news to the originals and the outside world will never know the persons involved. This reflection relieves my conscience somewhat, though not entirely.

What makes the story of the waitress important, aside from its human interest, is the fact that these women represent the advance guard of working women who are marching steadily deeper and deeper into the world of economic competition, getting into new and dangerous contacts.

The movement of women out of the home into the world began long ago. Since the war they have gone forward into the shop, the factory, and the office at a more rapid pace than ever before. There is now no talk of "back to the home." The war has made conclusive a revolution that had already begun. Naturally a change so vast and so far-reaching as that which is now going on cannot be effected without some losses. If women are destroyed or injured in this new life, there will be a loss to working women generally.

The occupation of the waitress will have to be classed for some time to come among the dangerous trades and the dangers are not such as might occur to men. They should be considered, however, in the same practical way because women are particularly well fitted for this work if the proper conditions are created. Losses which the women

of today are incurring, if understood, will serve to change conditions so that other women coming after may be safe.

The question is not economic as I shall show in the following pages and it is not one of overwork. I have been a teacher, a housewife, an office executive, and a waitress, and I have not found the last named occupation any more difficult than the other three. Every occupation, if entered into seriously and because of necessity, brings with it its quota of routine and drudgery and, while I was more tired physically as a waitress, I found this occupation more healthful than teaching or office work. I found also that I could earn as much money as, or more than, I had earned when I first started out to be a teacher.

Personally I found this experience interesting. Trying as it was and disagreeable as it was, I have come out of it with wider sympathies for all persons concerned, sympathies not only for the girls and for the men who conduct restaurants, but even for the patrons. The question is not one of persons but of institutions. These conditions have grown up naturally and inevitably out of the existing situation. If anybody is responsible it is society, and society ought to intervene to improve conditions.

A great deal of what I have written will seem shocking to many readers. The experiences were,

in fact, shocking to me. It is probable, however, that any intimate and realistic picture of life would be shocking to some one. I once heard a wise man say that there are many things shocking in human nature but only shocking because not understood. That we do not understand a situation in which we find ourselves is the reason we are shocked.

This book is, then, an intimate, personal, and realistic account of the life of a waitress in Chicago restaurants. If it has any value at all it is because it gives a truthful, sober, and exact statement of what conditions of life are for the woman who works in a restaurant and of what her interests and ideals of life are. It has no other purpose than that of making a certain situation intelligible.

CHAPTER II

MY FIRST EXPERIENCE AS A WAITRESS

I STUDIED the "Female Help Wanted" columns of the great organ of labor exchange, the *Chicago Daily News,* and under the one headed "Domestics-South Side," I found the addresses of several restaurants which were in need of waitresses. Then, dressed in my oldest and shabbiest black suit, I started out one morning in search of a job.

My first address was on West Van Buren Street. I fought my way from Wabash Avenue through the hurrying soot-stained crowds, while the surface cars creaked and groaned at my side and the "L" thundered furiously over my head, drowning all other sound except the shrill whistle of the traffic policeman, along narrow dark Van Buren Street, until I came upon the number I sought. It proved to be a restaurant and as I looked in at the people calmly eating at the little white-covered tables, I saw neat girls in white aprons carrying food on plates from the rear of the room towards these tables.

I started to enter, drew back, hesitated, tried to think clearly, but the din of the street seemed to interfere. I made another attempt. With my heart beating so fast that it nearly choked me, I pushed myself through the swinging door and walking up to the man who stood at the cigar counter, I asked:

"Do you need a waitress here?"

"We did," he replied, "but we hired one yesterday."

"All right," I said, and escaped gladly into the street.

That was all he said and all I said. My relief was enormous. I felt that by his refusal I was absolved from the obligation to become a waitress. After all, perhaps I did not actually need to be one. Perhaps I could go around and ask people about them. There was something terrifying about the idea of life so totally new, so absolutely outside the realm of my experience. But I had made this bargain with myself.

I was by this time walking along another street that crossed Van Buren. I looked at my next address. There it was, directly opposite me. I crossed and entered, not quite so excited this time. There was a woman at the cigar counter.

"Do you need a waitress?" I asked.

"Yes," said she, "see the manager in the back down there by the kitchen."

I walked toward the kitchen. I met a nice-looking young man in a white coat with the name of the restaurant embroidered on it in read leeters.

"Are you the manager?" I asked.

"Naw," said he, "in there," and he indicated a little door in the wall.

I opened the little door. There stood a little dark man sorting out piles of aprons and coats.

"Do you want a waitress?" I asked again.

"Yes," said he, looking me over, "where you worked before?"

"Nowhere in Chicago."

"Can you step lively?"

"Don't I look as though I could?"

"What's your size?"

"Forty."

"When do you want to go to work?"

"Right now."

"All right, take these," and he handed me a pile of white things. He opened the door. "Do you want to be a dinner girl or a steady girl?" he asked.

"I think I had better start as a dinner girl," I answered.

By this time we were out in the restaurant. "Take this girl downstairs," he said to one of the boys in a white coat, "and tell them to show her how to rig up."

I followed the boy down a narrow passage

and a narrow stairway into a damp, musty-smelling basement. At one end of it was a little room lined with lockers.

"Show this girl how to get into her duds," yelled the boy, and departed.

There were about ten girls in the little basement room. They were putting on their aprons, combing their hair, powdering their noses, applying lip stick to their lips and rouge to their cheeks, all the while tossing back and forth to each other, apparently in a spirit of good-natured comradeship, the most vile epithets that I had ever heard emerge from the lips of a human being, and mingled with these were long oaths of obscene profanity.

I felt dizzy, stunned, as though I were just coming out of the effects of an anæsthetic and things were not real to me. I was frightened, too. The musty-smelling little room seemed to take on an air of evil and of horror indescribable.

No one paid any attention to me. I attempted to get into my uniform. Finally a plain-looking girl, who had said nothing, offered to pin my collar and to tie my sash. She said her name was Lillie.

When I was dressed I went upstairs and the manager gave me a belt and a punch and the woman at the cigar counter gave me a bunch of

checks and told me how to punch them. Then the manager put me behind a counter up in front and told a blond girl to show me what to do.

"Ever worked in a restaurant before?" she asked.

"Not this kind."

"Well, you got a lot to learn, kiddo," said she, and with that word "kiddo" she seemed to admit me into the fraternal order of restaurant workers.

"You wait on them five stools, right here in front, see," she instructed, "first give 'em their 'set-ups,' that's a glass of water, silver and a napkin. Then take their order. And as soon as you bring 'em their order, you punch 'em a ticket. Then if they want more you punch that afterwards."

A bleary-eyed man was eating just in front of us and he droned to himself in a sing-song tone, "Another new girl! a new girl every day! where do they all come from!" And turning to me, he said, "You bet you got a lot to learn, kiddo, but she's a good little pal, a darn good little pal she'll show you."

Just then a man sat down on an empty stool. I gave him his set-up, and then I said, "What'll you have?"

"Ham on rye and a cup of coffee."

I knew where the coffee was, but I could not

see any "hams on rye." "Where do you get a ham on rye?" I whispered to a white-coated youth.

"Over there," he answered, "yell for it," and then he yelled for me "Ham on rye!" to a little grill on one side of the room.

"Yell over there for all the sandwiches, girlie," he said kindly, "and when they're ready that fellow sets 'em here on the counter and you pick 'em up. See!"

I began taking orders thick and fast. When they asked for sandwiches and coffee, or a glass of milk with doughnuts or pie, all of those things were just behind me or I could yell for them across to the little grill, but when I got an order for a "Roast Beef Special," I did not know what to do.

"Where do I get a 'Roast Beef Special?'" I asked the waiter boy.

"Down in the foundry," he said.

"What's the foundry?"

"Aw, the kitchen, kid, down there in the back."

I flew to the foundry, a narrow enclosure at one side which was separated from the main room of the restaurant by a railing piled high with plates and platters and side dishes. There stood a dozen girls all yelling orders to three perspiring chefs. Great dishes of meat, potatoes, and vegetables stood on the steam table just underneath

the railing. The sound of fryings and sizzlings emerged from skillets on a big range in the back of the kitchen and mingled in the din made up of the clatter of the dishes and the yelling of the girls.

"Roast Beef Special!" I yelled.

A chef picked up a plate, and with a huge spoon ladled out some mashed potatoes and plopped them down upon it, sprinkled a spoonful of spaghetti beside them, and passed the plate to a big cross-eyed chef, who with a huge knife cut a piece of beef from a big roast and slid it onto the plate.

"Here you are, dearie," he said, "charge him thirty cents."

A little later a man came in who wanted hot milk toast. I went to the foundry for it as I had been told that was where to go for hot things.

"Hot milk toast," I screamed.

"Get that in the laundry, girlie," said the big chef kindly.

"And where's the laundry?" I asked in despair.

"Up in front."

So I went back and yelled my orders across to the laundry. Most of the people that I waited on ordered ten and fifteen cent meals, although occasionally some one went as high as thirty cents.

At the counter there came men only and men of all kinds. Some were well dressed and quiet in demeanor, of sedentary habits and with small purses. They ordered meat with coffee and pie. Once in a while there would come a nice-looking boy in a fitted overcoat and with a generally well-dressed air. He was sure to order a cream puff or chocolate eclair.

Once, when there was a lull in business, a big bold-looking girl came up to me and said, "Do you see that man down there with the light hat and the red necktie?"

"Yes."

"Well, he wants to talk to you."

"What does he want to talk to me about?"

"How should I know? Go over and find out."

The man leered at me from slanting, half-shut eyes. I quickly decided that I did not want to talk to him.

"Oh!" I said, imitating the manner and the accent of my new companions, "he doesn't want to talk to me," and I went on with my work.

I worked from eleven-thirty in the morning until two-thirty in the afternoon. I flew from laundry to foundry, from coffee urn to cream spout, from setting up "set-ups" to swabbing off the counter and piling the dirty dishes in boxes underneath it. My fellow waiters and waitresses were very considerate and helped me in every way.

They called me "dearie," "Girlie," "kid," and "kiddo," and gave me whispered tips to save the butter, bits of breads, etc. and to use a dirty glass if I couldn't find a clean one, but not to let anyone see me do it.

At two-thirty Lillie came to me and said, "Let's eat."

"That's right," I said, "it is time. I almost forgot about it."

"Gee! I never forget to eat!" said she, "that's the main business."

"Can we have anything we want?" I asked.

Lillie and the others laughed heartily at this.

"Gosh, no!" said she, "we can have some meat stew, coffee, and pudding and that's all."

After we had finished our lunch, Lillie and I went down to the basement room and put our uniforms into our lockers. Then we started home together. When we reached State Street, Lillie said, "Where do you want to go?"

"I think I'll go over to Woolworth's," I said. I mentioned Woolworth's because it occurred to me that it was a place likely to be patronized by waitresses. But it got no reaction from Lillie.

"All right," she said, indifferently. "I live down here just a few blocks. Good-bye, see you tomorrow," and she walked on.

The next morning when I opened the basement door a pretty young girl was sitting on a bench

smoking a cigarette and spitting eloquently all over the place. The other girls were grouped around her. They were discussing their sweethearts, and the way they had spent the previous night. The pretty girl, who was about eighteen, said that among her lovers there was a street-car conductor.

Another spoke up and said, "I used to have a street-car conductor, and I never paid any fare then. But I ain't got any now, they all either got married or turned me down."

A girl about forty years old said that when she was out she couldn't take any beer because she was under the doctor's care and then she told what was the matter with her.

One of the others said, "And is that what you got the matter with you! Aw, Hattie, I thought you was decent!"

A loud laugh greeted this remark, and a girl said, "Hattie ain't never pretended to be decent as long as I've known her, have you, Hattie?"

"No," said Hattie, "I don't make no claims to being decent."

I looked at Hattie closely, for I supposed that people who had such things the matter with them bore outward and visible signs, but Hattie, though common looking, was rather attractive, and had a smooth, clean-looking skin.

Just then a pretty dark girl pulled up her skirts

and showed us her legs encased in white silk stockings and adorned with yellow silk garters.

"Gee where'd you get 'em?" cried all the girls at once.

"Stole 'em from my landlady to wear today," replied the girl.

"Say, she'll kill you if she finds it out," said some one.

"Tra! la!" laughed the girl, "she ain't a-going to find it out."

They went on with their toilets amid exclamations of profanity, vile remarks and jibes at each other, all perfectly good natured. They were very attractive girls with fresh-looking skins in spite of the rouge and the lip stick, and their chests and breasts were creamy white. I feel sure that it would have taken a specialist with the Wasserman test to have detected anything wrong with them. They seemed proud of their way of living and wished to flaunt it in everybody's face. They appeared to be happy, too, not cast down and ashamed of their degradation.

As we were going up stairs, Lillie put her arm around me and said, "Ain't them girls awful?" I could see that she wished me to believe that she was decent. When we got upstairs we joined the other dinner girls who were eating their breakfast at the counter before going to work.

I stayed at this place four days. Each morn-

ing while I was putting on my uniform, I listened to the conversations of the waitresses, and each morning I felt sick at heart. It seemed at times that I must rush out anywhere to get away from it, that I could not endure it for another minute.

But when I was upstairs I forgot this side of the life in the excitement of filling orders for the ever-changing occupants of my stools. Between eleven-thirty and one the revolving doors were never still. They seemed fairly to push and shove the vast throng into the restaurant. We could not clear away the debris quickly enough to make room for the newcomer. We slammed the "set-ups" onto the counter and rushed madly after orders while the manager walked excitedly up and down outside the counters and yelled wildly as he snapped a napkin at us, "Step lively, there! step lively, girls!" And we stepped lively and yelled in our turn, "Through, please!" to the boy who was trying to remove the boxes of dirty dishes, and to the little Polish girl who was trying to cut the pie.

On the fourth day about two o'clock, a man sat down at my counter who ordered bread and butter, sliced peaches, and black coffee. I brought the order. Then the manager came up and yelled at me.

"Bring him some cream for his coffee!"

"He doesn't want it," I said.

"Bring it anyway," he snarled.

"What's the use; he doesn't want it?"

"No, I don't want it," said the man, turning to the manager.

After the man had gone, the manager came to me and gave me what he then characterized as a "calling down." He was very angry. In conclusion, he said, "You do as I tell you if you want to stay here."

And before I knew it, I had said, "I'm not particular about staying."

"That's enough!" he yelled, "Take your apron off. You're fired! I'll give you your time. Go get your dinner and then gimme your duds."

I took off the "duds" and handed them to him, then walked out from behind the counter and down the basement stairs. Several of the girls were in the little dressing-room.

"What's the matter, kid?" asked one, "you ain't off till two-thirty."

"I'm fired," I said.

"You are!" they cried in chorus, "what'd he fire you for?"

I told them.

"Ain't that a damn shame! Say, ain't he the mean cuss! He was awful today!" and they were all sympathy and kindness.

"Never mind, honey," said one, "you ain't lost anything when you lost this job. You'll get

another. Try over at number 20. They won't ask you no questions."

The big bold girl came up and stroked my arm. "Ain't that the prettiest waist she's got on, girls?" said she, "I ben noticin' it every day, it's made so cute."

Another girl said, "Ain't she got the pretty brown eyes!"

"Ain't she!" repeated the big bold girl, and turning to me she added, "You better leave them eyes behind." And then she smiled.

I felt certain that I should weep. It was not so much sympathy for myself that moved me, though it all seemed very real to me, but it was the kindness and sweetness of these girls. Their sympathy for what they believed to be my misfortune touched me deeply.

"Good-bye, girlie," they all sang out as I was leaving, "Good luck to you! You won't have no trouble gettin' another job."

"Thanks, girls," I said, "I hate to leave you. I was just beginning to get acquainted," and amid a chorus of "Good-bye, honey, good-bye," I left the little basement room and climbed the narrow stair way into the restaurant.

I stopped to say good-bye to Lillie and she gave me her address. At the desk the cashier paid me for my four days' work and did not dock me for the half hour that I had not worked that day.

CHAPTER III

LILLIE

THE sign above a doorway in the lodging house area known in Chicago as the "Port of homeless men" reads "Marguerite Hotel, Rooms 50c, 75c, $1.00 per day and up." As I went up a long, narrow stairway, I was haunted by a vague impression that something was going to reach out and grab me. Eventually I bumped into something. Thinking it might be a door, I knocked. As a matter of fact, I pounded vigorously. An elderly woman in spectacles and a white apron opened this door and peered out inquiringly.

"Does Lillie C—— live here?" I asked, and added in the same breath, "I've come to see her."

Lillie was the dinner girl who had been so kind to me.

I stepped into a narrow hall heated by a big base-burner stove.

The woman groped her way up another flight of stairs. I was interested in Lillie, so I looked about. Leading from the hall were a number of

small, cheaply furnished bed rooms. These were but reasonably clean.

Lillie's restaurant voice called from above, "Come on up! I'm awful glad to see you!"

She led the way into a little room. A decrepit double bed sagged in the middle of the floor, a dresser with its mirror half hidden by gay neckties, appeared to be sliding towards one window, a rusty stove attempted to warm the dingy atmosphere, and a ragged strip of carpet tried to hide the splinters in the worn floor.

"Take off your things," urged Lillie cordially as she put a lump of soft coal on the fire that was smoldering in the little stove and poked it into a blaze. Then she drew up two chairs very close to the stove and we sat down together.

"Why didn't you come before?" she asked, "I ben lookin' for you every day. I ben sick and I ain't worked for a week. I fell on the ice and cut my head," and pushing back her hair she showed me a long ugly gash across the top of her head.

I have often wondered since what really happened to her.

I rocked back and forth in Lillie's biggest rocking chair and she rocked back and forth in her smallest one. The fire crackled and snapped merrily threatening to burst open the little stove, the surface cars rumbled cheerlessly below the win-

dows, and the smoke and fog of the winter day seeped in through the cracks and filled every corner of the little room.

"You know I'm married," said Lillie. "I had half a mind to tell you before, but I was afraid you'd tell them girls down to the restaurant, and I didn't want them to know. I don't have nothin' to do with none of 'em, and I don't want 'em to know my business."

"This is my man," she said as she handed me a photograph.

It showed a young working man dressed up in his Sunday best and Lillie herself wearing a wide-brimmed hat adorned with artificial roses and with a ribbon tied under her chin in a huge bow.

Lillie's wages at the restaurant were four dollars a week.

"Of course, I couldn't have a place like this if I wan't married," said she, and she glanced around the room with a look that said, "Ain't it pretty nice! It is my home and my man gives it to me."

"He's a printer," she went on, "I have to get up every morning to get his breakfast at five-thirty and he doesn't get home to supper until seven. If I didn't work, I'd be awful lonesome."

Lillie said that she was an orphan and had been brought up by an uncle who had kept a restaurant.

It was a restaurant with an assignation house above it called at that time, Lillie said, a hotel on the "European plan."

"But he raised me awful strict," said she. "Them's the kind that is most careful about their women folks. I worked in the kitchen at first and after that I took the cash but he would never let me do chamber work or wait on tables."

There was, however, an artist with curly hair and white hands, soft "like a lady's," Lillie said, who lived over the restaurant on the European plan. Lillie, who was a greenhorn, thought he was "grand." One day, when she was busy, but not too busy, in the back court, he leaned out of his window and said "Come on up, Lillie, I'll give you an apple."

Lillie ran as quick as a flash up those back stairs. "When I got to his door he was waitin' and pulled me in and shut the door tight," said she.

Her uncle found her later hidden in a closet, whereupon he grabbed the artist by the collar and kicked him downstairs. "I didn't have nothin' more to do with fellers until I was married, but I was married when I was eighteen. I ben married thirteen years. This is my second husband," said Lillie.

She seemed to attach but little importance to

this tragedy in her life, but went on telling me enthusiastically about her wedding.

"I made my wedding dress all myself," said she. "It was blue satin and I had white kid slippers and white kid gloves, and a veil, and gee! but I was swell. My uncle had been payin' me fifteen dollars a week and I had money laid by. We got a little flat and I bought all the linen and made it," and Lillie rocked comfortably to and fro in her rocking chair.

"You are the first girl I've met since I lived in Chicago this time that I've asked to come to see me," said she later. Lillie, like the rest of us, was a bit of a snob.

This remark of hers recalled to my mind the scene of my first experience as a waitress. The contrast of this life in the basement dressing room was so immense that I wanted to know more about the people. It encouraged Lillie to gossip.

"Lord, no, Myrtle's not a sport!" said she, "she's rich, she is, she owns property and her husband is a policeman, a sergeant, if you please!" I had never understood before what it meant to be the wife of a police sergeant. "But," added Lillie, "I don't wonder you thought she was a sport; she's the awfullest talkin' woman down there."

Then, lowering her voice and leaning confiden-

tially over toward me, as I sat slowly roasting beside the rusty little stove, Lillie retailed to me some of the more memorable and outrageous sayings of Myrtle, the wife of the police sergeant.

I learned much about life that afternoon from Lillie, about the life of the Loop, the life of men, the low, common, vulgar, intimate life of laboring men and women.

"I tell you there ain't a nicer place in Chicago to work than that place," she went on. "The manager treats you right and them chefs is the nicest that I ever had anything to do with. Why, in some places, the chefs are that mean they'll pick up a plate of stew and throw it at you! You'll find when you get to working around that conditions ain't no better anywhere than they are at number 40. I'm sorry you left. You should a took what the old man said to you. You know you can't sass the manager or the head waitress, not and stay in the place."

When I was ready to go, Lillie showed me her little closet kitchen where she prepared the food for herself and her "man" and then said, "I'll go along with you as far as the butcher shop." She put a skirt over the one that she already had on, slipped into her coat and tied her head up in a scarf fastening the ends well over her chin "on account of my teeth," she explained.

When we reached the lower hall, she said, "Come on, I want to introduce you to 'Mam,' and she led me way towards a back room.

"Mam" proved to be the elderly woman in spectacles and white apron, the keeper of the hotel, who had opened the door for me. The kitchen where we found her was apparently very small, but in reality it must have been of fair size, for it contained a cooking range which seemed to be fighting with a dining-room table for first place, a sink which vainly tried to escape notice by vanishing obliquely towards the wall in one corner, a sewing machine, two chairs, astride one of which sat an old man who regarded us with stolid composure, a poll parrot in a huge gilded cage which kept shrieking "Who's your friend, Mam? who's your friend?" and "Give poor Joe a cracker, Mam!" in an alternating sing-song, and two little woolly dogs as white as the snow down below in the street. On the table and on the sewing machine were piles of women's under muslins, the kind one sees in the shops on the tables marked 79c or 95c.

"Mam" said that she was pleased to meet me and I assured her that the pleasure was mutual. We then exchanged a few remarks about the weather and about Lillie's illness, and Mam made the parrot speak a piece for me and the two woolly dogs stand on their hind legs and shake

hands, and by that time I felt that I must go.

Lillie accompanied me down the street until we came to the butcher shop. I bade her good-bye and then watched her disappear through the frost-covered door of the dingy, dirty little shop that caters to the trade of the "down and outers" who inhabit this region of Chicago, because they cannot afford to pay carfare and must live within walking distance of the places which offer them some chance of casual employment.

I never saw Lillie again, but with her uneven skirts flapping over the run-down heels of her shoes, her shabby jacket buttoned across her flat chest, the ugly gash cut in her head, the scarf tied over her neglected and aching teeth as she passed through the door of the little butcher shop to purchase "the soup bone for her man's supper," she has always represented to me all that is most decent, all that there is of domesticity in that port of homeless men and women.

CHAPTER IV

FEEDING THE "LOOP-HOUNDS"

I DID not find it an easy matter to get my second job. I went from place to place only to be told that I was not wanted. At one place I learned that I could have work five hours per day, for which I would receive $5.00 per week, and that I must buy two uniforms consisting of a white skirt at $2.00, a waist at $1.25, and an apron at 75c. These must be purchased through the company and it would be part of my work to keep them laundered. I did not take the job.

Finally at East Congress Street, an oldish young man told me I might work from eleven to eight. I suggested eleven to two-thirty. He agreed to give me a trial.

He was a nice little man. He showed me where to hang my coat on a nail in the back of the room and gave me a tiny white apron to put on. Then he took me into the kitchen and said, with a wave of his hand, "Over there's where you get your hot stuff, and there are your sandwiches, and desserts and coffee you pick up yourself. You'll find

the napkins and glasses in the dining-room."

There was almost no one feeding in the restaurant at that hour. Some girls were changing table cloths and setting up the tables, others were sitting in the back of the room washing, wiping, and filling sugar bowls. The sound of dishes and silver sliding in and out of pans came muffled through the doors leading to the kitchen and the smell of roasting meat and boiling vegetables made pungent the whole atmosphere of the little place. Occasionally some one would sniff the air appreciatively and say, "Smells good today, doesn't it?"

I helped a girl to fold napkins.

"Ever worked before?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Well, you'll like it here. This is the grandest place and they're the grandest people. That fellow you was with, he's the manager, he's Billie Foyle, and the cashier is his sister. They're just grand!"

"What kind of people are the customers?" I asked.

"Mostly women," answered the girl, "and some of 'em are darn cranky. But you can't bawl 'em out. You've got to get along with 'em. Billie won't stand for anything else. They just about never give you a tip, and if they do it's a nickel and they act like it was a ten-dollar bill."

"No men at all?"

"Once in a while a man blows in. But he looks lonesome in here. Men most always give you a dime, but tips depend on you. If they like you, you gotta good chance for ten cents."

The scene changed. The rush began. I was soon swamped. I attempted to take three or four orders at once, got them hopelessly confused, forgot napkins, spoons, and glasses of water, and tried to return to the kitchen through the wrong door.

"For God's sake, look what you're doin'!" "My God, girl, can't you see I got my hands full of hot stuff!" "Other door, girlie!" were the remarks that were shot at me by the exasperated waitresses. Meantime Billie's eye was on me. I felt it even when my back was turned. It was clear that my days at Foyle's Teashop were to number no more than one or two.

The girls crowded through the kitchen throwing their dirty dishes into one pan, their dirty silver into another, and stacking the glasses on a shelf where they could be grabbed and used again.

"One roast beef."

"One chicken salad sandwich!"

"Two on the fire, chef! Quick, my customer's waiting!"

"That ain't your sandwich. Quit pickin' up

my order!" were the remarks that filled the little kitchen in quick succession. A girl said to me in a low voice in passing.

"There's twenty cents on your table, dear, better pick it up."

I hastened back to pick up the tips that I had somehow earned. There were two dimes and they had been left by two men. Under one lay a man's business card with his name, address, and 'phone number upon it I crumbled it up and threw it among the dirty dishes. Later I learned to know the meaning of the card left down turned upon the waitress' table.

At half-past two the girls sat down to lunch at two little tables in the back of the room. They were permitted to eat anything they wished. This is what they did eat: meat, salads, pastry, especially French pastry, and ice cream. The cashier sat down with them. They called her "Rose," and treated her as one of themselves. They talked about their clothes, their housekeeping, prices of food, and men. They always talked of men. Then they turned to the discussion of the girl whose place I had been hired to fill and who had failed to appear at work a couple of days before. It was because she had met with a horrible experience in a "Yellow Cab."

"It was a darn shame," said some one, "she was a decent girl till then. But I kept tellin'

her that she couldn't go out with fellows and drink and expect to stay straight."

"Sure not," said another, "fellows ain't spending their money takin' you to cabarets for nothin'. You can't expect 'em to."

"And if you once get stewed," said the first girl, "you're lost."

I was two days at Foyle's. On the second, in attempting to enter the kitchen through the wrong door, I collided with another girl and her tray went crashing to the floor. When I was ready to go home, Rose paid me $1.50 for my two days' work and told me, as nicely as she could, that they had hired a steady girl and would need me no longer.

I was again in search of a job and in a few days I found one. An amiable manager of a tea room one day directed me to the Café des Reflections with the remark, "They are always putting on girls."

The Café des Reflections in a basement on ——— Street, is a restaurant of mirrors. The ceiling is mirrors, the walls are mirrors and the pillars and posts that support the ceiling are mirrors. There are glass-topped tables and white painted chairs and blazing electric lights. The effect upon entering is like a blare of trumpets. I found later why the Café was always putting on girls. It was because of these mirrors.

I consulted the manager. He called the head waitress.

"Do you need a girl, Ellen?" he asked.

"No," said she, "I have one coming from the Alliance."

"Take this one anyway," said he, "she looks like a very bright girl and I would rather have too many girls than not enough."

Ellen led me to the basement dressing-room, assigned me a locker and gave me an apron. She told me to report to her as soon as I was ready. I hurried into my uniform.

The noon rush was on. People streamed into the café. Dazzled by the glitter and excited by the hurry and rush of the place, these clutched hastily at the backs of chairs lest they lose a chance for a place. Girls with trays laden with food and balanced perilously upon their right hands wound in and out among the glass-topped tables. Bus boys with trays of dirty dishes held high above their heads, slipped through the crowds on their glittering way to the kitchen.

Ellen stood in the front of the room ready to seat the patrons as they entered. In her left hand she held the long menu cards ready to hand to the guests. As soon as a "party" came down the basement stairs, she signaled to them, then led the way to vacant tables, walking with that swaying movement of the hips that is characteris-

tic of the head waitress, her blond head held high, her bosom, compressed within a tight brassiere, rising and falling underneath the lace of her "open work" blouse, and her waist held taut in the viselike grip of her double-barreled Nemo corset.

She assigned me two tables. I had to have help with my orders. At this hour the Café des Reflections was serving a table d'hôte luncheon of four courses. There were girls here however, who were waiting on four or five tables and who found time to smile, to chew gum, and to touch the guests lightly on the arm as they served them, but I could not remember whether the man at my first table was ready for dessert or salad or whether the lady at my second was waiting for her finger bowl. And this was a matter of extreme importance, for the finger-bowl is the shibboleth of the lowbrow and the highbrow restaurant, and the Café des Reflections is the cheapest place where one can be got in the Loop.

In my anxiety and haste I spilled soup upon the hat of one man. Covered with confusion I began to apologize. He was a most gallant gentleman and with an air of great magnanimity insisted upon leaving me a tip although I begged him not to do so.

At half-past two Ellen told me that I might go, but that I must return at half-past five.

"But I want only a lunch job," I said.

"We don't have lunch girls here, only steady girls and two-meal girls," said she, and added with the air of a Prussian general, "You are a two-meal girl. You work from eleven to two-thirty and from five-thirty to eight-thirty."

"And what are the wages?"

"You get six a week from the house and the side money you make is up to you."

I went down to the little basement dressing-room where I found laughter and confusion. The girls were changing from their black uniforms into stylish street costumes. They crowded around the one little mirror, splashing their cheeks with rouge taken from tiny boxes, dabbing their noses with little powder puffs, and outlining their lips with sticks of vermillion paint. The air buzzed with feminine voices.

"Where are you going, Marietta? . . . It's the States for me. North American? . . . Why don't you try something classy? I'm for a cigarette at the Russian Tea Room. . . Oh, hell, my garter's busted! Gee! Winter Garden's punk this week! Don't hog the mirror, you son of a ———!"

The girls at the Café des Reflections used better grammar than I had been accustomed to in the "Quick Eats," but they were just as careless in

their genders when they swore and they swore a great deal.

I seemed the only girl who was not changing for the street. I wore the shabby black suit that I had considered suitable for a waitress. I thought the other girls were a little contemptuous of me because of it.

"I'm going over to the Alliance," said a girl. "I'm tired and need rest."

"Oh, gee! life's too short to spend much of it at the Alliance, Flossie," said some girl gaily, "You can go there when there is no other place to go."

I told Flossie that I should like to go to the Alliance with her.

"Sure, come on," she replied.

On the fifth floor of the Merchants Building on State Street, is a door with a sign on it which reads, "Junior Alliance Rest Room." Flossie and I entered through this door and found ourselves in a large pleasant room furnished with light-colored porch furniture. Gay rugs were on the floor. In two corners were writing tables lighted by small wicker lamps, and in another corner were two sewing machines, while the fourth corner was partitioned off to form a tiny kitchenette and laundry. A second large room led from the first, but the door between was shut. It was always kept

shut, for in the second room tired girls were stretched out on narrow cots resting. Most of them needed rest."

"Is this a Waitresses' Alliance?" I asked of Flossie.

"No," said she.

"Well, what is it, then?"

"I don't know."

"Who supports it?"

"I don't know."

A stupid Scandinavian woman seemed to be the matron. She was sewing.

"Is this a working girls' club?" I asked her.

"Naw," she said, and nothing more.

"What is it, then? Who gives it to the girls?"

"The society," she went on sewing.

"What society?"

"Just the society." She continued to sew.

"What's the name of the society?"

"It's no name, just the big society." She bent her head low over her work.

"But who belongs to it, Jews, Catholics?"

"Naw, just ladies. Mrs. Armour and Mrs. McCormick, and ladies."

Light dawned upon me. "You mean some society ladies give it to the girls," I said.

"Yaw," said she.

The big room was full of girls. Some were curled up on couches, some were stretched out on

steamer chairs, others were talking together, but many were merely sitting saying nothing. There were plenty of old magazines on the table but no one was reading them.

Flossie greeted her friends and then we went into the rest room. We lay down on the little cots. I could not sleep, however, because of the noise made by the girls in the bathrooms and shower baths which opened from this room. These girls splashed and giggled and gurgled and swore. They flung gibes at each other of the same coarse good-natured kind that I had become familiar with among the girls at the restaurant. I visited the place several times and always the same sort of conversations, mingled with the damp, sweaty odors of bodies, floated over the cots where the tired girls lay, as the doors of the bathrooms were opened and shut.

"Better cut it out, kid! Too much is not a good thing!" . . . "Say, you're beginning to show what you do nights." . . . "There's something about a cigarette that gets me. I can't leave 'em alone." . . . "Say, do you think you own this place?" . . . "That's my towel, you damn —— bug! Quit grabbin' that soap!" . . . were some of the remarks that I overheard from time to time.

When I returned to the restaurant I thought I had been promoted. Ellen gave me four tables,

and they were up in the front of the room. I realized that I had been demoted when the girl next to me said: "It's too bad, kid, it's the poorest station in the house; all the hens sit here, but the new girl always gets it. You'll get moved back in time."

I got along well at dinner. It was tray service and, although trays are heavy, they save trips. But there seemed never to be any dishes. Silver, glasses, napkins, were not to be had when I needed them most. The bus boys were supposed to keep our buffets set up with necessary dishes but they never did even though we tipped them. The usual tip to a bus boy is ten cents a meal.

At half-past eight I descended to the basement dressing-room thoroughly exhausted. But, although I was tired, nervously tired, I did not want to go home. I was in a mood for anything, anything but home. The other girls were dressing to go to the theater, to a movie, or to a cabaret. I was sorry that I had made no such plans myself. I had been in the habit of reading or studying quietly in the evenings until ten or eleven o'clock, but after the excitement of such a day, I felt that to dance in a cabaret to the music of a jazz band was just the sort of recreation that I would appreciate. One dollar and ninety-five cents in dimes and nickels, my tips for the day, jingled lightly in my pocket. The jingle added to my excitement.

I was beginning to feel the fascination of the tip.

The next day was Sunday and Ellen had told me that I would have to work from eleven in the morning until eight in the evening with no time off in the afternoon. I was afraid that I could not do it, but when I had finished the day, I was not so tired as I had been on Saturday. The Sunday work was more regular and not so confusing. My tips for the day came to two dollars and sixty-five cents. Never before had ten cents seemed so much to me as the little shining dimes that I picked up from amongst the dirty dishes which each guest left behind him. I learned to look as anxiously as any other girl for this appreciation.

By Monday I had become relatively acclimated to mirrors and the glitter of the Café des Reflections. In the morning, when I first went to work, Emma, the girl whose station was next to mine, wanted to leave the floor for a few minutes. She asked me to look after two men whom she had served and to get her tip if they left her one, before the bus boys could steal it.

I got the tip for her. I also served an old man at one of her tables. When she returned, I gave her the dime that had been left for her, but when she cleared the table where the old man whom I had served had been sitting, she stole the dime he had left for me.

Later she borrowed my pencil and kept it. I asked her for it, and she gave me hers which was like mine, but broken. It was only by insisting that I recovered mine. All day she kept slipping my orders on to trays that were half full of dirty dishes and taking my tray for her own use. Yet she did not seem to dislike me, for she spent every leisure moment in good-natured gossip with me.

"You'll make no dough here, kid," she said kindly, "if you wear a wedding ring. String it around your neck if you're afraid to leave it home."

When I was ready to go home that night, the cashier stopped me and said, "You owe the house thirty cents, Fannie,. Can you pay me now out of your tips?"

"How is that?" I asked.

"Here are two checks, this one with an undercharge of twenty cents and this with one of ten cents. You have to make them good. And here's one with an overcharge of ten cents. You don't have to pay that," and she slipped the checks over the spindle on her desk.

"I have that last coming to me, I suppose," said I.

She looked at me, and there was infinite sarcasm in her glance. "That goes to the house," said she.

I handed her the thirty cents, three precious dimes from my little store.

I worked at the Café des Reflections five days in all. I felt that I was getting along better all the time until suddenly on the evening of the fifth day, everything seemed all at once to go wrong. The crowd began to arrive as early as half-past five and there was a steady stream all evening. There were not dishes enough to go around. There was no silver, no napkins, no bread. In the kitchen there was a shortage of food.

The kitchen became a mad house. The cook swore at the under-cook. The dish washers cursed the waitresses who kept grabbing dishes out of the dirty dish water and drying them on napkins. The pantry maids snapped and snarled while the waitresses shrieked their orders high above the din.

About eight o'clock a dark nervous man and a very blond lady sat down at my small table. They ordered two fifty-cent dinners with beer. I brought their soup and immediately afterwards their meat course and beer. Then I went into the kitchen to get dessert for four little ballet girls from the Winter Garden who were at one of my larger tables. I was loading my tray down when Emma rushed into the kitchen and shouted:

"Come in here, quick, Fannie, that fellow you just waited on is raisin' Hell!"

I hurried back into the restaurant. When the dark man caught sight of me, he pounded on the table and shrieked, "I want some service here."

"What is it that you wish?" I asked.

"What do I wish!" he repeated savagely, "I wish my coffee, of course."

I brought the coffee as quickly as I could. We were in the habit of serving coffee with the dessert unless the patron asked to have it with the meat, and it had not occurred to me that this man would want both beer and coffee with his meat.

I served the dessert to the little ballet girls and then began to remove the dirty dishes from the table where the dark man and the blond lady were sitting. He kept growling at me while she sat embarrassed in silence. A fork slipped from a dirty plate and slid rapidly down the seam of the man's trousers. He jumped from his chair as though he had been stuck with a pin, waved his arms frantically in the air, screaming and cursing. All eyes in the restaurant were turned towards him. He rose and stalked in majestic indignation past the cashier's desk and up the stairs that led into the street. The blond lady laid a quarter on the table for me and then she followed him, stopping on her way at the cashier's desk to pay the bill. That night the little ballet girls each left me five cents as tokens of their

sympathy. They had never before given me a tip.

When I was ready to go home, Ellen came to me and said, though very kindly, "The manager says I'll have to let you go, you aren't experienced enough for this place." And she handed me an envelope containing my wages for the five days.

I went down to the basement dressing-room in disgrace. The two-meal girls were changing into their street suits. It was a gay scene and I felt that I should miss it when I had no longer a part in it. Marietta was tilting a ravishing hat over one eye at an irresistible angle; Lorraine, seated upon the floor, was pulling a pair of lavender silk stockings over her slender young legs; Dolly was pasting a microscopic bit of court plaster just above the dimple on her right cheek, and Irene was carefully adjusting a hair net and nose veil. All were talking about their engagements which they had for the evening or for the night and quite frankly saying what they expected to get from this or that fellow in the line of money, amusement, or clothes.

Flossie entered the dressing-room.

"Ellen told me 'he' made her fire you," said she, "she feels real bad about it," and then she added, "I'm awful sorry, kid."

I was exhausted and my nerves were raw. The tears began chasing each other down my cheeks.

I could make no reply to Flossie. Finally I gave myself up to my grief and sobbed with uncontrolled ardor. The girls flocked about me and began to sympathize.

"I know that fellow," said Marietta, "he was brought up in my town. He's in vaudeville and that's his partner, that blond that was with him. He's a dope fiend, takes morphine. You don't want to pay any attention to him, he don't know what he's doing any of the time."

"But the boss made Ellen fire her just the same," explained Flossie.

"It was a damn shame to fire you for that, kid," said Tillie, a big blond as she put her arm around me. "I'm quittin' myself tonight, the damn place gets on my nerves. Don't you care, you'll get another job."

"But it makes you feel so——mean to be fired," interposed one of the others.

"Yes, it does," admitted Flossie, "but don't cry, Fannie, it ain't worth it. Get on your things and come along home with me. You live South, don't you?"

At the Elevated I had completely regained my composure and was ready to smile at the whole thing. Flossie and I settled ourselves for a little visit together.

"The Café des Reflections is one of the best places in the Loop," said she, "and it's too bad

you struck it before you were entirely experienced. Now, I'll tell you what to do; you go up to the Illinois Waitresses' Alliance at — W. Washington Street and tell Hilda I sent you. She's the head of the Alliance and she'll send you around to work extra until you get experience. Don't try another steady job until you are an experienced waitress."

I promised Flossie that I would do as she said and I wrote the address of the Alliance on a card that I had in my purse and then I ventured to ask a question that had been in my mind.

"Flossie," I asked, "are Marietta and Lorraine and those other girls as bad as they try to make us believe. I have been wondering if perhaps they were not trying to show off a little but did not really do the things they say they do."

"Yes," answered Flossie, "they are just as tough as they say they are. I did just as they are doing for years. You seeI was left a widow when I was only twenty, and my mother-in-law took my boy to raise. I worked in all the restaurants up and down the Santa Fe and I went out with the boys and had as good a time as anybody. But I wouldn't do anything like that now. I'm married and it wouldn't be right."

"Does your husband know that you led this kind of life?"

"Of course," laughed Flossie, "he led the same

kind himself." But we are satisfied with each other now."

By this time we had reached 51st Street, and with a cordial invitation for me "to come see her soon," Flossie bade me goodnight and left the train.

CHAPTER V

WORKING EXTRA

I FOUND the Waitresses' Alliance without any trouble and introduced myself to Hilda.

"Sit down," she said, "I get you a job."

She then went on answering telephone calls, completely ignoring me. I began to study Hilda. She was short and stout, of middle age, with a false front of brown hair that was not as deceptive as it was intended to be. A pair of nose glasses tilted uncertainly upon the bridge of her small nose. She wore a fussy shirt waist that had been laundered too many times in the wash bowl at home and a silk skirt with three broad bands of satin around the bottom. A pencil poked into the false front just above her ear added a rakish touch. Her appearance in no way betrayed her for the genius and diplomat I soon discovered her to be.

It was ten o'clock when I arrived and there had been but one girl besides myself in the office. Presently, however, the door opened letting in in rapid succession some twenty or thirty girls.

There were all types, the young and pretty, the plain and neat, the modish person, the sloven, and the frump. They distributed themselves about the office; some crossed their legs and read newspapers, some gossiped, and many merely sat quietly with hands lying loosely in their laps and did nothing at all.

The phone began to ring. "Main 246," said Hilda as she took down the receiver. "Yes, I send you couple girls."

"Who wants to go to Worthley's?" she called out.

Two girls arose and passed out of the door without saying a word.

A little silence followed. A girl arose from her seat near the table, walked over to the steam radiator, spat behind it, and nonchalantly resumed her place at the table. The 'phone began to ring again.

"Yes, ma'am," said Hilda. "I get you two girls over there by 'leven o'clock. Yes, ma'am, you can depend upon me," and turning to the room full of girls, she called out.

"The woman at the College Club, she want two girls in a black waist. She pay a dollar. Who want to go?" and two girls responded to this request just as they had responded to the former one.

This occurred again and again until Hilda had sent out every girl in the office except me.

"How much does it cost to join the Alliance?" I asked.

"Two dollar," replied Hilda, and added, with a glance at my shabby suit, "If you can pay a little now all right, or you can pay after you have worked."

Just then the 'phone rang again. "Yes, sir, I send you a girl right away," and turning to me Hilda said:

"You go to — North Joliet and work lunch." She handed me the official card of the Alliance with the address of my lunch job written on the back.

The address was not hard to find and I was soon busily at work. I was assigned three tables, but the place was so small and so conveniently arranged that the work was not hard for me. It was a little German place with a German proprietor, German food, and many German patrons. It was also very dirty. In this it was like the other German restaurants I met later. However, it had an atmosphere of *Gemütlichkeit* characteristic of German restaurants.

The proprietor greeted the patrons personally as they came into the restaurant and exchanged jokes or remarks about the weather with them.

After they were seated, he went about from one to another to see if each was properly served. Often he changed a plate with the remark, "That order is cold. Let me give you some that is hot." Now and then he laid an arm affectionately across the shoulders of a guest. Occasionally he walked to the door arm in arm with a patron, stood chatting while he paid his check, and then bade him a personal farewell. In every way he showed a personal interest in all who patronized his little place.

Towards the end of the lunch hour, two German boys, evidently from the country, came in with their mother. They ordered huge quantities of *wiener schnitzel,* noodles, rye bread, and coffee, They spoke German to one another; so I spoke to them in German. They beamed with pleasure and we got on famously. The mother entered into the spirit. When they left the boys shook hands with me and each left a quarter in my palm. The German proprietor was pleased. He offered to hire me "steady" on the spot.

I noticed that he was very much interested in one of the waitresses, a Gretchen-faced young girl who seemed to share with him the responsibility of the management of the little place. I wondered if she was his daughter.

At the end of the lunch hour, when we were not busy, an old man sat down at a table and this young girl took his order. He entered into con-

versation with her and, after a time, I heard him say,

"You can't stuff that down me, there isn't a good girl working in a restaurant in the Loop."

Gretchen began to cry. The proprietor overheard the conversation. He walked behind the table, put his arm around the girl, and, turning to the old man, said:

"Ach, Gott! you should not talk to her like that; she was good once."

I went to the Alliance every day for several weeks and Hilda sent me out every day. I worked in all kinds of restaurants. In the course of time I acquired considerable knowledge about the work of the waitress. As I became "experienced," I learned what the term meant.

One thing which I might have known, came home to me with the force of a discovery. I learned that the relation between the waitress and patron is a distinctly personal one. It is a good deal more intimate for example than that which exists between the frigid person who sits as a window in the Randolph Street Railway Station and scornfully hands out tickets to the sheeplike public that pass her windows.

Eating in a restaurant is not exactly a sacrament, but under any sort of human conditions, it is something of a ceremony, a ceremony in which the waitress plays an important rôle. The

existing intimacy is greater perhaps if the patron is a man than if she is a woman, though in the latter case the intimacy exists.

The men who patronize the cheaper restaurants look upon the waitress as a social equal and any man who comes in other than the rush hour expects a little visit with her. These conversations are never particularly edifying, but as a means of defining the cultural status of such places they are of value.

One day when I was working at a lunch counter on South Deering Street, a weary young man came in and seated himself on a stool at my counter.

"Say, kid," he began confidentially, "I've just had an awful blow!"

"How's that?"

"Why," he continued, "after being up all night and making a night of it, I woke up this morning to find that my best girl had taken the big leap and married another fellow. And, girlie, I want a pot of coffee, a big pot of coffee, and two hand-picked eggs, boiled four minutes, and some thin toast. I'm willing to pay for them just so they're the real thing."

I chirruped something intended to be cheery. He responded with "You bet! and girlie you bring me that pot of coffee right now."

I asked one of the other girls where they kept the pots of coffee.

"Pot of coffee! Gee!" she said, "he must be a swell guy. We don't have that kind around here very often. Get a tea pot and fill it up."

I did so and then I mentioned the hand-picked eggs boiled four minutes.

"Say, you tell him these are A No. 1 specials right from under the hen," said the cook, and put them in to boil.

The cook's remarks in regard to those eggs were, as usual, ironical. Besides it occurred to me that eggs hard boiled were no real balm for broken hearts. I said to the young man, "These eggs are guaranteed A No. 1 specials by the cook but not by me."

"That's right, kid," he said laughing, "play safe," and when he left he put a dime on the counter for me.

Another day two Yellow Cab drivers sat at my station in an "eat quick" restaurant. They were two young boys, so I began pleasantly,

"Well, boys, what'll you have?"

"What you got?"

"Just everything."

"Well, give us calves' brains and scrambled eggs on toast twice, and be quick, girlie, we been up all night and we're hungry."

I hurried their orders back to the kitchen.

"On the fire, kid," said the cook, "pick 'em up later."

I returned to the counter and gave the boys their bread and butter. "What kept you up all night?" I ventured.

"Arrested," replied one, "spent the night in the Harrison station."

A little later he explained. He said, "The Marquette Hotel is tryin' to run its own cabs and it won't let a Yellow Cab in there, not even if we are called. So last night us two got into a fight, and we got arrested.

"That was too bad," I said, because I could not think of anything else to say.

"Naw," said the cabby, "it was a lot of fun. We got fined a hundred and costs but the company paid it. They stand by us all right."

"Lots of excitement down in that Harrison station. Two girls was arrested yesterday for stealin' aigrettes at Usher Lane's. They had nine or ten of them stuck in under their hats. What do you know about that?"

"And there was a married woman that stole some furs, sable furs," supplemented the other cabby, "and the judge sent her up, and she has two little kids at home."

"That was tough," said the first cabby. "She bawled somethin' awful, but that old judge down

there, sent her up in spite of her havin' them kids. You know that ain't right. She was dressed awful poor and she said her heart was set on havin' them furs. Queer how women like them things."

"Now them two young girls," he added, "they was only about sixteen and they was dressed awful stylish and they tried to act smart. They was just as bold! They got ninety days and I was glad of it."

"Why, if they were so young?"

"Oh, say, if you knew what I knew about girls in this burg!"

I registered interest.

"There ain't no decent girls here," he continued.

"You surely can't mean that?"

"Yes, I do. I have experience with all kinds them that's sports and them whose folks is respectable, and they're all alike. All they want you to do is to spend money on 'em. If you'll take 'em cabarayin' and spend fifty dollars on 'em, you can have about any girl around. I know, 'cause I've done it."

I protested mildly, in defense of my sex.

"Well, they're some, but they're darn scarce," said the cabby. "The girls here is the wisest bunch. A fellow ain't got no chance against 'em."

A restaurant is not just the place I would choose to discuss the sex problem. But I was interested. I suggested that men were partly to blame.

"No they ain't. A girl has to show she's willin'. There ain't no fellow that a decent girl can't stop if she wants to. She's got the thing right in her hands."

"I got acquainted with a girl from a good family once," he continued, "and she started a flirtation with me, but I knew she was respectable and I couldn't marry her and I wouldn't go with her for no other purpose, so I turned her down. She was a pretty girl, too, and I liked her. Say, she started the same thing with another fellow, and in three months he made a bum of her. Aw! it makes you sick! I got five sisters and they ain't never comin' here."

These children gave me ten cents as they went out.

"You can't get along in any kind of restaurant," said a girl to me, "unless you jolly the customers."

And certainly the customers look for the jolly. Many times it is simply friendly and innocent but quite as often the man starts deliberately to explore. He had, perhaps, merely an intellectual interest. But few men, however, are looking for purely platonic adventures.

If the waitress is too busy for jollying, the at-

titude of the patron is quite different. During the rush hour at a counter in a hash house, the waitress might as well be a machine as a human being for all the consideration she gets from the men she waits on. The busier she is, the greater her difficulties, the more impatient and clamorous become the men. And it is always at the noon hour that the coffee urn runs dry, that there is no silver in the drawer, and no napkins are to be found. The man is hungry, the way to his heart is through his stomach, and the waitress cannot take that way quickly enough; so he vents all his accumulated wrath upon her. The final hardship is that he neglects to leave a tip. It is a well-known fact that the waitress always makes her best tips on the slow days and in the slow hours. The patrons' lack of sympathy is one of the hardest things that the waitress has to bear.

CHAPTER VI

A SUPPER GIRL

UP to this time I had worked as a waitress in about fifteen different restaurants, lunch counters, tea rooms, cafés, employees' lunch rooms and department store lunch rooms. I had learned to throw food on the counter at some places like the Adams Lunch at 181 West Adams Street, which are called "dumps" in the waitress world; to serve it with as great dispatch but with a little more art, at hash houses like White and McCreary's at 227 South Lincoln Avenue, and to be gentle and refined in the service which I gave to the members of the College Club in the Chandler Building. I had learned that I need never expect a tip from the women who, with bundles and babies, eat in the lunch room at Worthley's nor from the patrons of the employees' lunch room at the American Heat and Light Company, nor from the habitués of the Park Tea Room, the rendezvous of the office woman.

Already I was learning a great deal about the nature of woman and a great deal about life. I

knew by this time, in a general way, about fifty waitresses. A number of those I knew intimately. I knew Evelyn, who stayed decent because she had a little girl, and it was Evelyn who loaned me eight cents for a lunch which we bought and ate at the Alliance one day when there were not enough jobs to go around and I had been caught downtown with only the nickel for my return carfare in my purse. I had made the acquaintance of Dottie, who was now married and decent, although she told me that when she needed a pair of shoes she had found it easy to "earn" them in the way that other girls did. Then there was Lucy who was old and deaf and stout, and who half the time was out of work, and Minnie, whose husband kept a saloon on the West Side, and who worked for companionship and on occasion hired a taxicab to come to the Alliance, and Selma, who was chairman at all the Alliance meetings, presiding like an I.W.W., and commanding by sheer force of personality and loudness of voice, with her, "My God, girls, listen to what I'm saying."

I learned also to know men: the gay old man who always paid the waitress silly compliments; the grouchy, puffy, youngish fellow who clamored impatiently for food, and the pathetic, middle-aged clerk whose salary of fifteen dollars per week condemned him to a hopeless daily struggle

to satisfy a man's appetite and still leave a margin for clothes and room rent. Among other familiar figures were the man with a diamond ring who radiated an odor of strong tobacco, the boy with the restless shamefaced interest in woman as represented by the waitress in her white apron, and the father of a family who gratified a roving disposition for adventure by coquettish little jokes with the girl who served him.

I felt by this time that I knew a great deal about the Loop restaurants and about the Loop life. I began to be curious about the restaurants in other parts of the city. I determined to get my next job in some neighborhood outside the Loop. Therefore, one afternoon at the Alliance, when someone asked, "Who wants a supper job at the Hayden Square Tea Room?" I immediately became interested.

"I worked there last nite," continued the girl who had spoken, "but I live North and it's too far for me, so I'm going to give it up."

"I worked there last summer," said another girl, "it's a hard place to work, so many damn steps to go up and down and the fellow that runs it never wants you to do the same thing two days in succession, but the money's good and the people are nice to wait on."

I volunteered the information that I lived South.

"It's the job for you, then," said the girl. "Stop in on your way home; I'm sure he'll take you. He needs a girl awful bad."

I went to work that evening at the Hayden Square Tea Room as a supper girl, that is from five to eight. I worked there for four weeks every day including Sunday and I received in wages seventy-five cents per day or $5.25 in wages per week for three hours' work per day. On Sundays I worked from four in the afternoon until midnight because an extra girl was always needed to handle the extra Sunday night business. For this extra time I received another seventy-five cents, thus bringing my wages for the week to $6.25.

I found that the "money" was indeed good and particularly good on Sundays. The first week I earned in tips and wages, $8.75, the second $11.90, the third $11.30, and the fourth $11.40, making the total for four weeks' work $43.35. And this job, except on Sundays, required only three hours per day. Besides my wages and tips, I received each night an excellent dinner made up of anything I wished to choose from the bill of fare, and I could have all that I wanted.

Between the patron of the tea room and the waitress, the social gulf is wider than it is in the cheaper restaurants. This differs in degree in the Loop tea room and the neighborhood tea

room. For example, the relation between patron and waitress was much freer at Foyle's than at the Hayden Square, the reason being that the former is downtown, while the latter is a neighborhood gathering-place.

At the Hayden Square, however, the relation was extremely friendly and not at all suggestive. The patrons here preferred courtsy to swiftness and in such a place a really nice girl could do very well. There were half a dozen pleasant old gentlemen who liked green tea with whom I became very friendly indeed, and there was a young man with horn-rimmed spectacles and an unusually sweet smile who came to dinner every night with his wife and baby and who said to me, "I wish that you could wait on us always."

A certain doctor and his wife were pleased to have me wait on them. He used to joke pleasantly with me and she was very curious about me although too well-bred to ask any direct questions. In fact I built up a nice little clientèle in the four weeks that I worked at the Hayden Square. Three young Jewish men were particular favorites with all of the waitresses both because of their agreeable manners and their liberal tips. All the Jews who came to the Hayden Square were especially courteous to the waitress.

One evening a woman became angry with me because I kept her waiting. I told her that I was

sorry and explained that two of our waitresses were sick, but she received my apology ungraciously and muttered something about "that being no excuse." She left me no tip and, although I waited on her several times after that and gave her excellent service, she never gave me a tip. She did not fail to tip the other waitresses. For the most part the people that patronize a place like the Hayden Square are well bred and no one has a better chance of judging this than the waitress. When I met with discourtesy from any one it was from a woman.

There were some curious types at the Hayden Square. There was an unmarried woman about thirty-five who was staying at the hotel and who was in love with the soda-fountain man. He did not respond, although he had to be courteous. She used to come down in the afternoons and sit talking to him. The waitresses hugely enjoyed all this, but it was really pathetic. Another used to come when we were not busy, order some tea, and carry on a long monologue about things that happened in the hotel. It was harmless gossip and hard to follow, but she did not seem to need any response from us, though apparently we were her audience. Several women who came for afternoon tea would converse in loud tones about "my housekeeper," "my car," and "my chauffeur," all with the obvious intention of impressing

the waitresses. I often wished that they could have heard the diagnosis of Letty, our Irish girl. who would say: "The damn —— they haven't got a car! Their husbands are traveling men and they do their own work just like we do."

The waitresses who worked here were pretty. They were even stylish. They began at once to take an interest in me, and to make suggestions about the improvement of my appearance.

"Why don't you wear shorter skirts, Fannie?" asked Mary, and added, "long skirts make a girl look like an old woman."

"If you would 'dip' your hair a little in the front, Fannie, you'd be a real good looking girl," suggested Louise.

"Don't you change your hair, Fannie," interposed Letty. And to the others, she said.

"Fannie's hair is all right. Lots of the swells who come in here wear their hair that plain way. I think it looks nice. That's the way I'd do mine only it's all broke off with the curling iron."

Letty was the best waitress we had and the most popular both with the patrons and with the other girls. She said that she had run away from home when she was seventeen and that at first she had done office work but that there was no money in it, so she had quit and "gone to hashin'." She had worked all over the Loop. A year before I met her, she had married. She said that

her husband was from a good family, but that he had run away from home when a small boy.

"He lived with women from the time he was seventeen," said she, "and they supported him. But since we've been married, he's had a steady job. He gets twenty-five a week now and he's the grandest man and so good to me! And the thing I like best about him, Fannie, is that the drunker he gets, the more of a gentleman he is. He can be as drunk as a fool, but he's always a gentleman."

Letty and her husband were devotees of the cabaret. It was nothing for them, so she said, to spend five or ten dollars in an afternoon or evening on eating and drinking in these places. This was their ideal of perfect enjoyment. Letty would often come to work at five o'clock much the worse for drink and at these times her temper was frightful. At times she was in a state bordering on *delirium tremens*. She would scream and clutch the hands of one of the girls and beg her to hold tight, crying pitifully.

"I am going crazy; oh, I know that I am going crazy!"

And Mary, one of the other girls, exchanged wise glances with me and said:

"Letty and her husband ain't got no sense. Too much drives you nuts."

One night in the kitchen, Letty smashed a plat-

ter over the head of one of the negroes and we always had a feeling that she might throw a glass of water in the face of any one of us on the slightest provocation.

Letty and Mary quarreled constantly although they were very fond of each other. These quarrels were comedy, low comedy. Both girls were dishonorable and never hesitated to tell lies about each other. Mary would insist that a certain tray of dirty dishes belonged to Letty and Letty would insist that it belonged to Mary. They played all sorts of mean little tricks on each other. Letty carried out as few dirty dishes as possible. She had a clever way of slipping a few on to this girl's tray and a few on to that girl's tray until almost none were left for her. The rest of us "stood" for this quite amiably, but when it was Mary's turn, there was always a battle.

A certain family group, consisting of father, mother, two sons and a daughter, used to come to the Hayden Square almost every night. None of the girls wanted to wait on them for as they said, "It takes all night and they are only good for a quarter or maybe fifteen cents." Mary was little and quick and when she saw them coming, she would escape into the kitchen and remain hidden behind the tall racks of dishes, whispering gleefully to the rest of us as we passed by,

"Gee, Letty got the 'family' tonight. I ducked when I saw them coming!"

The girls here watched for the tip and were indignant if they did not receive one from every person served. It made Letty furious to have a patron "stick her up" and Louise used to say, "If they can't afford to tip, they have no business eating in a place like this."

And while I was a waitress, I found myself agreeing with Louise.

There was in this group no code of "honor among thieves." I often lost a tip that was mine because the patron would hide it among the dishes. If another girl cleared that table, she took the tip. There were many quarrels about this among the girls although each knew that she would do the same thing when the opportunity offered.

The kitchen of the Hayden Square was to all appearances clean. But at night it was infested with rats. Great fat, gray rats, as big as kittens used to slink across the tables and racks, or stand on their hind legs on the floor and blink at the waitresses as they hurried by with their trays of dirty dishes, or lurk in the sinks waiting for the scraps of food left on the plates. Mother rats, with whole families of babies, would forage around among the discarded plates and saucers and squeak and squeal with pleasure when a

choice morsel was discovered. The waitresses and the kitchen men used to make coarse jokes about these rats in which the ever-present sex interest was the important factor.

In fact the entire conversation centered about this interest. We waitresses used to eat our dinner in a little windowless closet of a room which we called the "boudoir" and in the half hour allotted for the purpose, Mary and Letty talked freely of the intimate life which they had with their husbands, and the unmarried girls, with but little attempt at concealment, that which they had with their lovers.

In the kitchen the same atmosphere prevailed. A man could not cut a piece of meat for a girl without making a filthy joke about it or making a suggestive movement towards her. There was never any open violation of the proprieties but always the suggestive talk and behavior. Afterwards in the "boudoir" each girl would retail what the men had said to her. They enjoyed these things, in fact they felt complimented by them. After hearing these women talk, I realized for the first time, how fragile a thing are the refinements of life.

The waitress had brought with her into the home atmosphere of the Hayden Square the manners of the downtown restaurant. The sort of jokes that are current in the kitchen of a restau-

rant, as, of course, might be expected, are not refined. They are broad Rabelaisian, dirty. In the easy familiar contact with men, these girls had acquired in regard to matters of sex (in which, like most women, they were mainly interested) the incredible candor of men.

CHAPTER VII

A TEA ROOM FOR MEN

I DID not get my job at Usher Lane's through the Alliance, because Usher Lane does not employ Alliance or Union help. I answered an advertisement for "Long and Short-Hour Serving Maids," which appeared one morning in the *Tribune*. When I applied at the Men's Grill on the sixth floor of Usher Lane's, the manager (let us call her Mrs. Chesney) said:

"Come tomorrow morning ready for work. Your hours will be from eight-thirty to five-fifteen."

A little later she asked, "What is your name and where do you live?"

I gave an address on Thirty-second Street.

"That is in my neighborhood," said Mrs. Chesney pleasantly.

"Indeed!" said I politely, "and where do you live?"

She told me. She lived in the same apartment building that I lived in myself.

I did some quick thinking and decided that

since we had lived there for a year without having seen each other, we should probably live there several more without meeting.

When I reported for work the next morning, Mrs. Chesney was waiting for me at her desk and in front of her was a large application blank.

"I'll write this for you, Mrs. Robinson, if you will answer some questions," said she. I noted that she did not call me "Fannie" as they had done in all the other places where I had worked.

She wrote down rapidly my name, address, and phone number, a list of the places where I had worked previously, together with the length of time spent at each place, and then in conclusion demanded the names of two persons as references. I was utterly unprepared for this.

"References!" I cried in dismay, "no one ever before asked me for references."

"Usher Lane must have them from every employee," said she.

I hesitated, looking hopelessly confused.

"It was not until seven years ago that I took a business position," said she, and added kindly,

"We ought not to be ashamed of honest work, Mrs. Robinson; we can dignify our labor by the manner of our performance. Let me give you a little advice; even though you may not have had to work for your living always, do not let the girls know that it is new to you. If they think

that you feel above them, you will not get on well."

I began to see that Mrs. Chesney thought that I belonged to the class of "sheltered" woman who, when overtaken by a sudden reversal of fortune, finding herself untrained turns to whatever seems most expedient at the moment.

"I think you will like it here," she went on; "we try to make working conditions pleasant for the girls. There are many advantages here that are not afforded elsewhere. We give each employee a shopping card which entitles her to a liberal discount on all purchases and we furnish free medical care during illness. When you have been with us six months, we give you one week's vacation with pay, and when you have been with us a year, we give you a two weeks' vacation with pay. We aim to keep our girls. Miss Clark, one of our long hour girls, has been with us for fifteen years and you will find that most of our girls have been with us two and three years. We like the kind of girl who is willing to remain in a place a long time. You are the type of young woman that Usher Lane likes to get and likes to keep. If there is any way that I can help you, never hesitate to come to my desk and speak to me."

She dropped her r's and her accent showed

that she had come from the neighborhood of Boston but her voice was utterly devoid of any suggestion of affectation.

"Thank you," I said gratefully to the kindly, gentle, little woman, and I felt guilty and uncomfortable with the knowledge of my real purpose in my mind. With her New England standards of honor and honesty, I knew that she would not approve of me.

When she had taken down my references, Mrs. Chesney turned me over to a nice plain girl named Ada, who conducted me to the kitchen and showed me how to pick up my breakfast.

"We are allowed only rolls and coffee," said she, "or toast if we make it ourselves."

The kitchen was a long narrow room. Against the wall at the back were machines for washing china, glasses, and silver. In front of these were great racks where the clean dishes could be placed. In the center along the wall were refrigerators where the milk, cream, and butter were kept and also the vegetables and all materials for making salads. In front of these refrigerators were racks where the cream and butter, and the salads after they were made, could be placed ready for the waitresses to pick up as they came through. Next in order were the baking ovens and behind these stood women rolling out cookies

or beating up cakes and muffins. At one end were huge ranges in front of which the meat and vegetable cooks were working.

All along the opposite wall were narrow cupboards with sliding doors where the china and glassware were kept. On this side also a narrow niche was reserved for the coffee urn. Everything was exquisitely clean and the women working there in blue gingham dresses and white caps and aprons looked most attractive. All at once I felt hungry. I hastened to pick up my breakfast of bran muffins (delicious ones that you can get nowhere except at Lane's) and coffee and, seated on a big box near a warming oven, I ate it with relish.

After breakfast I helped Ada to wash buffets and tables until ten o'clock when we went to another kitchen on the seventh floor to pick chicken from bones. This was a smaller kitchen and only three women were working there. One was making pastry, another was preparing vegetables and mixing white sauce in a huge machine designed for that purpose, and a third was mashing potatoes in a big mashing machine.

Ada and I were joined at the chicken picking by two other girls, Adelaide and Kathleen. The girls began to gossip together. Adelaide was a widow but said that nothing could induce her to

marry again because as soon as a woman married a man she lost him, but, if she were not married she could keep half a dozen on the string. She resembled my conception of a "madame" of a house of prostitution.

Kathleen was a pretty Irish girl with the transparent white skin and delicately colored cheeks that so often characterize the Irish maiden. She began a friendly conversation with me. She said that she was engaged to a young Irishman who had been in America the same length of time that she had, that they had expected to be married in June but she had begged off for another year because they could not yet afford marriage.

"If I had to go on working, I couldn't keep my flat as it ought to be kept," said Kathleen. "And anyway," she added, "I don't know that I could stand a man around every day just yet. Now I see him only Wednesdays and Sundays, and that is very nice. If I see a man more than twice a week, I get sick of him."

Just here the pastry cook took about a dozen apple pies out of the oven and set them out on racks to cool. The aroma from them filled the air deliciously. We sat silent for a moment absorbing the delightful odor.

"You ought to get rich making those pies, Martha," said some one.

"Well, ain't I one of Usher Lane's high salaried employees?" remarked Martha drily, as she went on rolling crusts.

"Perhaps when I am older," continued Kathleen, "and need a home, I will feel differently about it. But while I am young, I like to be free. It's fun to doll up for a man twice a week; any girl enjoys dolling up that often, but to have one around all the time is no fun."

"What do you do the nights you are not with him?" I asked.

"I mend my stockings and do my laundry work and have a quiet time at home. I let him have Saturday night to take out some other girl. I think it is only fair to a man to let him see other girls once in a while."

"Time to dress, girls!" called a voice outside the kitchen door.

We hurried to the dressing room. There a maid handed us each a clean apron, clean collar and cuffs, and a perky little hair bow of white muslin. The dressing room was large, comfortable, and very clean. We dressed carefully. The rouge, the powder, and the lip stick were in evidence here just as they had been in other dressing rooms but there were fewer oaths and less filthy language. The percentage of plain, decent girls seemed greater than at other places where I had worked.

When we were dressed, we returned to the grill room where we assisted the short hour girls, who work from eleven until half past two, to set the tables. There were about sixty-five girls altogether and of this number two-thirds were short hour girls, for but one meal is served here.

This grill room is furnished with dark, massive furniture upholstered in leather; heavy draperies of pompous velvet shut out any ray of light that might force its way in if it happened to be a fair day in the Loop, and lights are low or carefully shaded. A fountain in the center gurgles sleepily and sends out a breeze to refresh the heavy city air.

At the four corners of the main room are small rooms shut off by thick hangings, which are known as "party rooms." These have a seating capacity for from twelve to twenty men and may be reserved in advance by groups desiring a privacy greater than can be afforded in the main room. Around the sides of the main room are booths with wide, deep cushioned seats, and tables with small shaded lamps, at which five or six men can find places.

Here the lords of creation are free to scatter cigar and cigarette ashes where they will, and to sit with legs crossed without fearing that any critical feminine eye will search them out, for no woman is permitted to enter as a guest. If

a man wishes to entertain his wife, his friend, or his sweetheart, at Usher Lane's, he must do so in the women's lunch rooms.

By half past eleven the grill room is ready for the day's guests. Every chair has been carefully dusted and every table has been carefully washed. Each table has its centerpiece and plate doilies in place, its napkins neatly folded, and its allowance of silver correctly laid. The maids then stand around, very prim and neat in their demure uniforms and await the advent of the patrons of this exclusive rendezvous, this tea room for men.

Shortly before twelve, the elevators in the front of the room begin to unload the guests of the day who stop at the cigar counter to purchase smoking materials and then leisurely stroll past the gurgling fountain until they reach their accustomed places. The maids hand each a menu card, and then, with flattering deference, await the orders.

On this, my first day, a handsome old gentleman with white hair and an air of being bored with all things at present existing, sat down at one of my tables. Nonchalantly he unfolded his napkin, stuck a *pince nez* on the bridge of his aristocratic nose, and glancing hastily at the menu card, said indifferently:

"Bring me half a lobster and a cup of coffee."

After a very long interval, I returned from the kitchen with the half of lobster and the cup of coffee on my tray. But the accompaniments of that small order were truly legion. The lobster reposed upon a bed of lettuce, and around about him was a dabby little mixture dotted with caviar; a lump of yellow mayonnaise nestled coyly underneath a claw; an olive marked the apex of his tail; a sprig of parsley contrasted vividly with the orange red of his horny exterior, and a bit of pimento gave the needed dash of color to the whole. And to serve this luncheon with a nicety demanded by the exquisite dignity of the grill room, I brought extra plates and knives, designed especially for the serving of lobster in half portions, and, beside the cup of coffee I placed a graceful little cream pitcher with a swanlike neck, and a silver bowl containing oblongs of sugar upon which lay a tiny pair of silver tongs.

When the gentleman had finished pecking away at the costly half of lobster and sipping his coffee from the Haviland china cup with its wreath of roses making a conventional border around the rim, he ordered an orange ice for his dessert. This I served to him with even greater ceremony than had attended the serving of the lobster. Finally I placed before him a tiny silver finger bowl garnished underneath with a lit-

tle square of white peppermint candy. No gentleman who lunches at this tea room would ever consider his meal complete without it, and woe to the waitress who, in her hurried progress through the kitchen, fails to secure it for her guest. In his righteous indignation he will forget to deposit beside his plate the little shining dime which is his recognition of her service to him as a personage.

We long-hour girls dined each day in the largest of the party rooms which was in the corner of the grill that was nearest the kitchen. Promptly at two o'clock we filed into the kitchen, and, tray in hand, collected from the various racks and warming ovens the materials for our meal. We were permitted anything we wished, including dessert and generous pots of tea or coffee. We used the same dishes and silver that were used by the guests and those who wished could indulge in the luxury of a napkin, but on our dining table, instead of doilies or table cloth, were spread sheets from the newspapers left carelessly behind by the men who had eaten and gone.

We were allowed one hour for this meal and that hour was every day packed full of fun and frolic. The girls told stories, played jokes, gave impersonations, and jollied one another about the happenings of the day. For example, one day

I had taken a drink of water in the dining-room. It was at the close of the lunch hour and almost no one was in the room except the girls, but my act caused a mild sensation. It seemed that this was against the rules. At lunch an English girl named Janet, who was very clever and jolly, leaned across the table towards me and said:

"I hear you've taken to drink, Fannie."

"You may do that elsewhere but not at Usher Lane's," said some one else, with mock solemnity.

"Do you not realize, Fannie, that you are a part of a great organization?" said another clever girl, "you are not a 'hasher.'" And then she added in imitation of Mrs. Chesney's manner, "you are a saleswoman. Your business is to sell food but you are no less a saleswoman than the young person who sells cloaks and suits."

"It's well for you, Fannie dear, that mamma didn't see you," interposed Janet, "or you would be this minute at the desk in the front of the room getting a little lecture on how to behave at Usher Lane's."

"Are you going to report me, Janet?"

"Report nothing!" laughed Janet, "we are tickled to death that you got away with it."

After dinner each day we did side work, i.e., filling sugar bowls, cleaning ash trays, etc. At this work there was plenty of opportunity for

sociability and the girls did not fail to avail themselves of it.

One day Kathleen told us at great length how a "swell" dinner had been served in the home of an English gentleman in London where she had once been employed. The side remarks of Janet and Ellen during this recital were exquisite comedy. The girls screamed with laughter.

Then Kathleen started to repeat Wolsey's farewell speech but Ellen told her to cut out the highbrow stuff and give us something that we could understand.

Ellen was an American girl of the Bowery type, frankly common and vulgar but very clever. Janet, however, had an air of quiet refinement which I have noticed is characteristic of the English servant. Both had once been maids in private families but neither would have returned to that occupation. It is the group life in the waitress world that makes the appeal and the lack of it is the strongest reason why girls are unwilling to work in private families.

Just then I looked up from the sugar bowls that I was piling high with Crystal Domino and Ellen said, "Sh!" shrugged her shoulders and remarked ironically for my benefit, "Yes, and if she hears, she'll think we're tough here and of course we are not."

Every evening at half past five there was a

great rush and hurry in the dressing room for the girls were anxious to get to Worthley's, the Boston Store, or the Mart to shop.

At the end of a week I decided to leave Lane's. It was my first long hour job and I found it very exhausting. I had never worked in a more badly managed kitchen. The women who served the waitresses in the kitchen were slow and unbusinesslike. They were always running out of rolls, dishes, etc. In the dining-room we had to hunt all over for extra linen with which to set up our tables the second time. In fact the entire grill room was run in far from the businesslike, modern manner which I had expected from such a firm.

On Thursday I told Mrs. Chesney that I should leave and I explained why. She said, "Finish out the week, perhaps you will have a change of heart by Saturday."

I remained firm in my decision to leave but I found it very difficult. Not only did Mrs. Chesney use every argument to induce me to change my mind, but the girls themselves came to me and begged me to stay. "And why won't you stay, Fannie?" they insisted, "don't you like us?"

In vain I argued that the hours were too long, the work too hard, and the wages too small.

"But you will like it here just the same if you

will only stay a little longer," they insisted, and Janet offered as a special inducement, to give me her station which was a little better for tips than mine.

When I went to the paymaster's window to get my check cashed, one of the kitchen women was there drawing out some money.

"Why are you leaving, girlie?" she asked.

I told her.

"We get six dollars a week, the same wages as the waitresses, and we make no tips," said she.

"But why do you put up with it?" I asked, and added, "it is a crime to pay such wages. No restaurant in the Loop pays so little."

Her eyes filled with tears as she replied, "You are young, girlie, you can afford to be independent, but I am old. If I give up this job, where can I get another?"

Usher Lane's keep their help. In spite of the low wages the girls stay on. They take a keen interest in their work and do not need to be told to do things. Each feels a personal responsibility. It is the policy of Usher Lane's that holds them, the feeling that they are safe. They know that they will be given every chance to make good and do not fear that they will be "fired" for a trivial fault and sent out into the world to hunt another job. It is the sense of security that makes the appeal.

CHAPTER VIII

HOME HUNGRY JANET

WHEN I was eating lunch the last day I spent at Usher Lane's, Janet, the English girl, leaned across the table towards me and said:

"I'm mad at you for leaving us, Fannie, but come tomorrow and drink a cup of tea with me just the same. I want to show you my nice little flat that I live in all by myself."

The next day was Sunday. I started out to pay my visit to Janet. She had given me an address on Homefield Avenue near Thirty-seventh Street, one of the business thoroughfares of the city.

It was a lovely spring day. As I walked along looking for Janet's number, the surface cars, carrying their heavy Sunday loads rumbled noisily past me. The little shops on either side of the avenue were closed and radiated an air of small town respectability. Some sort of religious meeting was being held in a vacant store building and men and women of the small town type, dressed in their Sunday best were passing in

through the open door. Children in white stockings and cheap straw hats were playing on the walks.

Janet's number turned out to be an office building with stores on the ground floor. An entrance at the side disclosed a stairway leading to the rooms above. I mounted the stairs and found myself in a narrow corridor with doors opening upon it which bore the signs of doctors, dentists, and dressmakers. On one door was the name, J. S. Littleton.

I knocked. Janet opened the door.

"Oh! it's you, Fannie!" she cried with pleasure, and, taking my hand, she led me in.

She had a tiny apartment consisting of a bed-sitting room, a combination dining-room and kitchen, and a bath. In spite of the fact that the dining-kitchen had no outside light nor ventilation and that the plumbing in the bathroom was antique and unsanitary, the little place had a charming air of hominess and cleanliness. Photographs of Janet's family were scattered about and several books of the popular novel variety were on the little living room table. Gay colored cushions decorated the bed couch and a comfortable rocker was drawn up before the one small window.

Janet was strangely like her little apartment. Her pale sickly skin spoke of the lack of sunshine

and fresh air, yet there was about her the same air of cleanliness and respectability. Her smile was gay like the cushions on the bed couch and she suggested the same sort of romance that was written between the covers of the books which lay on the little table. The light of her strong sweet soul lighted up her plain face just as the one small window with its little potted plant gave light and cheer to the little sitting room.

Janet was very proud of her home. "You know I roomed for years," said she, "and then I felt that I must have a place of my own. I wanted it all to myself so I could wash when I pleased, take a bath when I pleased, and have things as I wanted them. I was afraid at first to live all alone like this, that is why I put my name on the door J. S. Littleton, so strangers wouldn't know that a woman lived here. And I was afraid on account of what people would say about a girl living alone, that they wouldn't understand that I was just home hungry. The landlord didn't want to rent to me, either. This is a respectable building and they have to be careful. But I gave Mrs. Chesney as a reference and I didn't have any trouble getting my flat after that." Then she added proudly, "It's a good recommendation for a girl to work at Usher Lane's."

"I had a room-mate, a nice, refined girl," continued Janet, "but she went away, and, although

I have lots of girl friends, I don't like any of them well enough to have them live with me. As long as I can afford it I want to keep this place alone. It costs me twelve dollars a month, but it is worth it to me. I don't spend money on clothes and cabarets the way most of the girls do. I'd rather have a home."

Janet set the table for us in the little dining-kitchen and we sat down to have a cup of tea with bread and marmalade. She reveled in the atmosphere of domesticity and played the hostess to perfection urging me again and again to take another cup of tea and to have more bread and marmalade. We gossiped the afternoon away, "just as my mother and I used to do in the old country," said Janet.

"My room-mate was a Bohemian girl," began Janet, as she poured my second cup of tea, "so nice and refined, but she never did well at Lane's because she wouldn't fight, and if you want to get on in this world you've got to fight for your rights. I felt just as she did when I first began to work and the other girls walked all over me. Then I woke up and began to fight back. I'd like to see anyone try to put anything over on me now. A working girl has to fight every inch of her way, Fannie."

"I've worked here for years; ever since I came

from England, and I've had good jobs. Two years ago I had two hundred and fifty dollars in the bank. Then I was sick and had to use up all my savings. A year ago last fall I was down and out; I didn't know how I was going to eat. Jobs are hard to get in the fall. The only thing I could get was this job at Lane's. It wasn't as good as other jobs I'd had, but I had to stick. Every day it seemed as though I couldn't stand it another day. The work was so hard and I never saw the sunlight for months except on Sunday. It was dark when I went to work in the morning and dark when I came back at night and I was shut up all day in that dark room with those electric lights and no fresh air. That's why we all look pale and sickly. As soon as I saw you, I knew that you had never worked much, you looked so fresh."

"I like the girls, and I like Mrs. Chesney. If it wasn't for the fun I have there cutting up with the girls, I'd go mad. But I've saved a hundred and fifty dollars now and as soon as I can, I want to go on short hours and then I'll learn tailoring. I can't afford to be a waitress all my life."

"It was six months before I made any money at Lane's. At first my tips were not more than ten or twenty cents a day. It's hard for a decent quiet girl to make tips anywhere. Now I have

my regular customers, married men with families, who don't come up there to flirt, and I generally make a dollar a day in tips."

"I've never had a word out of the way said to me. But we have all kind of girls at Lane's just as at every other place, and the sporty girls and the ones that jolly the men make the good tips. Not that I'm narrow minded, Fannie, living around this way takes all that out of you, and I don't criticize the girls. If a girl has a lover and they think it best not to marry, as long as they are not injuring any third party, I think it's between them and God. But when it's for money, I don't hold with that."

"I think I'm pretty lucky now. I'm getting six and a half in wages because I have worked there a year and a half, and I have this little place all to myself, and just about everything I want except a piano. I do want a piano; I love music so! I've got a pile of music that high," making a motion with her hands, "and I feel that I must have a piano to play it on pretty soon. I'm thinking of renting one."

I wondered where she could put it in that tiny flat.

As I listened to Janet, I was filled with admiration. Alone in a great city, absolutely detached from her family and the friends of her childhood, she had the courage to make this struggle for

existence and at the same time to cling fast to her ideals, and to do this in an environment which so obviously did not demand this adherence. She stood for all that was most decent, most respectable, most wholesome in the waitress world and yet, so broad were here sympathies and so wide her vision of life, that she had no word of criticism for those who did not order their ways in conformity with her standards and ideas of convention.

When I asked Janet if she liked the movies, she replied:

"Yes, indeed I do. I go once or twice every week. Last week I saw such an impressive picture called 'the Reward of Virtue.'" She proceeded to sketch rapidly the scenario, dwelling with the greatest pleasure upon all the details.

"It was the story of a chorus girl in a big city and she was beautiful. Of course they are always beautiful in the movies," and Janet smiled wisely here. "And she was the only one who was good in that whole chorus. The other girls and the manager put all sorts of temptations in her way, but she resisted them all. Finally a rich young fellow asked her to go to supper with him at a café and he tried to tempt her but she said no even to him, though she loved him. When he found he could not tempt her, he gave her his card with his name and address on it, and he told

her to come to him at that address if she ever decided that it did not pay to be virtuous.

"A day comes when the chorus girl is discharged by the manager because he says that she does not help to fill the house with her friends as the other girls do. Soon she is without money and without food. So she goes to the apartment of the rich young man and she tells him that she has decided that it does not pay to be virtuous, and that she will stay with him.

"The young man tells her to stay there, but that he has an engagement for the early part of the evening, but he will return later. He goes out and gets drunk and does not return until the next morning.

"Well, that night when the girl is sitting waiting for the young man to come home, there is a knock at the door and a servant from the apartment across the hall says that her mistress is sick and will the girl come and stay with her while she gets a doctor.

"The chorus girl goes and she stays all night because the woman is very sick and they can't get a nurse. The woman has a baby and when it is born, the doctor shows the girl how to wash and dress it and when it is washed and dressed she sits and holds it in her arms and then, all at once, she feels so glad that she has escaped a great danger.

"The next morning early she goes back to the

young man's apartment and finds him sitting there. She tells him where she has been and then she takes him by the hand and leads him across the hall and they look through a glass door at the mother and her baby lying on the bed. Oh! it was such a beautiful picture, Fannie! The sun was coming in through the windows and shining with such lovely colors on the mother and child and the chorus girl said to the young man, 'I have decided that it does pay to be virtuous, for the reward of virtue is motherhood.'

"'Yes,' said the young man, 'the reward of virtue is motherhood. Will you be my wife?' And then the curtain went down."

"It was the most impressive picture, Fannie, every girl ought to see it," and Janet's eyes were bright with warm appreciation and sincere pleasure. There was no question in her mind as to whether or not marriage with the rich young man could be looked upon altogether in the light of a reward.

When I was ready to go Janet accompanied me to the door.

"Do come again, Fannie," she urged. "You don't know how I have enjoyed this visit! I have the girls at the restaurant, of course, but I haven't very many friends on the outside and it's nice to know a girl that you can ask in for a cup of tea and a bit of toast and marmalade of a Sun-

day afternoon. I'm sorry you've left the restaurant. I liked you from the very first day, and if you'd stayed you'd have been like Marie to me. Not that I blame you, though; it's hard to work long hours and that six dollars at the end of the week looks pretty small.

"And Fannie," she added, "if you want to work at the places where the money's good, don't tell that you've ever worked at Lane's. They'll just laugh at you and say that in that case they don't want you."

"Why is that?"

"It's the lack of system. You don't have to be swift to work at Usher Lane's. Any old lady can get a job there," and she laughed as she bade me good-bye.

CHAPTER IX

WHERE THE WAITRESS WORKS

THE waitress will say, when talking of jobs, "Anything is better than a hash house," and she will work in one only when she can find no other place. She very often begins her career in one but, if she is a girl with any ambition, she works into something better as soon as possible. If she remains a waitress for life, she is almost sure to end in one, for the hash house does not demand youth and physical attractiveness in its waitresses.

Of the 1,250 or 1,500 restaurants in Chicago, I feel that I can safely say that approximately 75 per cent. are hash houses. Two or three are found in every block in the Loop, and they are scattered along every business street throughout the city no matter how insignificant that street may be. They do most of their business at the lunch counters which occupy the greater part of their rooms, but invariably they have a sign on the window outside which reads, "Tables for Ladies." These tables are, however, few in number and the ladies who frequent the hash houses

are fewer still, even with the most liberal interpretation of the term. The hash house depends for patronage upon men customers.

The hash house is open day and night. The employees, both men and women, work in "watches" of nine or ten hours each. These watches are known as the straight watch, *i.e.*, ten hours in succession, and the split watch which may be from 7 A. M. until 2 P. M., and from 5 to 8 P. M. The straight day watch may begin at any hour after 5 P. M. and the straight night watch any time after 4 P. M. The waitresses who work a straight or split watch are called "steady" girls.

Because of the great rush of business at the noon hour, the hash house in the Loop also employs a large number of extra girls between the hours of 11 A. M. and 2 P. M., who are known as "dinner girls." The hash house serves only short orders and "plate dinners" (meat, potatoes, and one vegetable all on one plate), and aims to make good by serving these orders at top speed. It caters to the business man who wishes to swallow the necessary amount of nourishment in the smallest possible amount of time and to pay the minimum price.

The tea room is different. In the first place it has no counter. All the guests are seated at tables and there is an affectation of clean linen and

attractive service. The tea room caters to women and to the sedentary business man whom long experience has taught a certain caution and who prefers a light repast rather than a square meal. It specializes in dainty sandwiches and salads, and in desserts that have a little flavor of the home-made about them. The waitress in the tea shop wears a nifty little apron instead of one of the all-enveloping variety; she takes time to visit a little with her patrons, to study their wishes, and to serve the food to them rather than to throw it at them. In time she acquires a mincing manner that indicates refinement. The meat dishes are garnished with a bit of parsley or a lettuce leaf and the desserts rest upon small plates that are "underlined" with doilies; the china is dainty, the napkins have a bit of individuality about them; the ices and sherbets are finished with a luscious cherry; the prices are about double those of the hash house.

The tea room is found all over the Loop, but especially upon or near Michigan Avenue. It is seldom located upon the ground floor but hides itself away upon the upper floor of an office building and is easily accessible only to the initiated. It is also found in every neighborhood in the city and more often it is located in a house or in the basement of an apartment building than on a business street.

The tea room is open only in the day time. The girls who work there come on watch in time to serve breakfast, and work until after dinner at night. The Loop tea room also employs extra dinner girls who should be called lunch girls, who work from 11.30 A. M. until 2.30 P. M., and the neighborhood tea room employs extra supper girls who work from 5 to 8 P. M.

The tea room seems to attract a better class of waitress, a neater, prettier and usually a younger girl. The seclusion of the tea room appeals to her. At the Park Tea Room which is located on the second floor of the State Building, a waitress said to me, "This is a nice place to work if you've got swell friends and you don't want them to know that you are working."

The café serves three meals a day and it serves them at tables, not at a lunch counter. It aims to give substantial food at these meals and at a reasonable price, but it does not attempt to provide the dainties either in food or appointments that are set forth by the tea room. The manager of the café tries to employ the youngest, prettiest, and most efficient girls that he can find and he has little trouble in finding them, for the café is the most lurcative place in which the waitress can work, not because the wages paid by the management are better than those paid in other places

but because of the tips which, in the café, are the greatest source of income. The result is that the chorus-girl type of waitress is found in the café, the girl whose stockings are always silk, whose underwear is pink crepe de chine, and whose street clothes are *la dernière crie* in fashion modes.

The patrons of these cafés are vaudeville artists, chorus girls, actors and actresses in the legitimate drama, office men, brokers, shop girls, telephone girls, waitresses with their lovers, chauffeurs, railroad conductors with their wives, mothers and daughters from "down State" who are in town to do a little shopping, farmers from Iowa who are seeing the city, greasy Italians with their greasy wives and still greasier babies; in fact, a truly cosmopolitan crowd.

The café gives them a really good *table d'hôte* luncheon for fifty cents and an equally good *table d'hôte* dinner for sixty cents, and it makes no difference to those who do not know, that the perspiration drips from the chef's nose into the soup and that all the help spit indiscriminately upon the floor in the kitchen. For these conditions are general in all kitchens in all public eating places where men are employed.

Two other types of eating place where the waitress works are the employees' lunch room provided by large manufacturing concerns and the

clubs like the College Club, The Advertisers' Club, the Woman's Club, the Men's City Club, etc.

In the employees' lunch room the management gives a substantial meal at the least possible cost. For example at the American Heat and Light Co. the employees get soup, stew with potatoes, salad or a vegetable, and dessert with tea, coffee or milk, all for fifteen cents. At the College Club a two-course luncheon is served for thirty-five cents, and a four-course luncheon for fifty cents. The club is open only to members and such guests as they may choose to bring.

Both the clubs' and the employees' lunch rooms are carefully avoided by the waitress, for the wages are small, the hours long, and there are no tips. It is, however, much easier to keep a job in these kinds of places and the working conditions are likely to be good, but they offer none of the fascinations of the profession and into positions of this sort drift the older women who have passed through the stage where new experience is all important, and have reached that where relative security has more value.

Then there is the department store lunch room, which is a combination of the tea room and the café and open only during the day. It caters chiefly to women and for this reason is also avoided by the waitress as long as she is young

and attractive enough to get a job where men are patrons. But when she has lost the charms of youth, when she becomes slow of hand and foot, the department store lunch room may become a haven of refuge. Any observer can verify the truth of these statements in Usher Lane's Tea Rooms for women, where the waitresses are middle-aged, with hair screwed tightly back and fastened with one pin, and where it would be difficult to find a kissable mouth or a pair of enticing eyelashes. Many of these middle-aged women have never worked as waitresses until they began at Usher Lane's where the minimum wage is paid and the tips from the wealthy patrons are few in number. The pretty and efficient waitress goes where her services receive more active appreciation.

The neighborhood restaurant may be of the café or tea room type. Very often the café has a lunch counter in connection with it but in a restaurant of this type more business is done at the tables than at the lunch counter. The neighborhood restaurant is a more significant factor in city life than the Loop eating place, because the downtown restaurant, for the most part, feeds business people who must of necessity eat away from home, while the neighborhood restaurant is usurping an important function of the home itself, for its patrons are not only those detached indi-

viduals who live in furnished rooms, but also married couples who are just beginning life together, and mothers and fathers with their children.

The girl who formerly did general housework in the home is now a waitress. She escapes much of the drudgery which falls to the lot of the house servant, for that is done in the restaurant kitchens by negroes or by Polish immigrants; she has companionship and definite hours; and she makes more than twice as much money as the maid in the private home.

As one of our writers on home economics has said:

"The city housewife, who finds it difficult to get a servant and expensive to keep one, or who may herself be employed during the day, turns to the restaurant for the solution of her problem. She does not, however, find it satisfactorily solved, for the restaurant keeper is too interested in profit making to pay any attention to dietetics. The restaurant at its best to-day is merely a makeshift during this period of transition from the home dining-room to some sort of coöperative eating place." Just how we will work out a satisfactory solution for this problem of modern city life is an interesting subject for speculation.

The attitude of the employer towards the waitress may be described as one which alternates between patient resignation and active exasperation. He expects her to lie to him, to steal from him, "to

stick him up" (*i.e.*, fail to report for work without giving him notice), and she makes it a point not to disappoint his expectations. In the summer months, when girls are scarce, he is at her mercy, but in the winter he has his innings.

I began work in the winter of 1917 and I was repeatedly fired from my first jobs for some trifling mistake. I was not a competent waitress, but if any of the managers had had any vision, they might have seen that I was the material out of which a good waitress could be evolved and that it would pay to be patient with me. But they did not see it and it suited my purpose to be discharged. In fact I preferred being "fired" to quitting, for once or twice I found some difficulty in formulating reasons for wishing to depart.

When I was discharged I immediately got another job. I never had any trouble about that. In fact I found it much easier to get a job than to keep it. But my progress from hash house to café, from café to tea room, and from tea room back again to hash house, taught me something about the business and about life. I discovered that in a Greek restaurant the waitress was expected to be "on the job" every minute, that there was no time for visiting or for comradeship. The Greek feeds his waitresses only the commonest food, never provides them with a dressing room or even a mirror, but with a few hooks only on a

wall upon which to hang their hats and coats. Invariably he wants them to wear caps. A waitress hates a cap.

The Greek is efficient; he is thrifty, and he is clean in so far as efficiency demands cleanliness, but no farther. He aims to turn out a certain standardized type of food at as low a price as possible and yet leave for himself a fair margin of profit. He takes the impersonal attitude both with his employees and with his patrons. He usually works in the restaurant himself in some capacity, perhaps as cook or counterman. The patrons seldom know who he is.

The German manager is the direct opposite of the Greek. Every patron knows him. Clad in the height of fashion, and wearing nothing that would suggest the employee, he circulates among the patrons and is a good fellow. His food always has a certain individuality, and, although he charges a good price for it, the same people come back to him day after day. They sit in the same places daily and laugh and joke together, for the German restaurant is permeated by an atmosphere *"gemütlichkeit."* The German is not particular about sanitary conditions nor fussy about details of service, and the waitress likes to work for him. He always provides a little dressing room for his girls and does not appear to notice if they linger a little over their toilets. He allows them time

to eat and to gossip over their food and he does not nag at them while they work nor shout at them to step lively when he knows that they are already working at top speed.

At the Hayden Square the girls were paid the best of wages and were given the best of food." They can't make a distinction by feeding you different food because you are working girls," said the manager, "I won't stand for that." And he was kind in many other ways. The Hayden Square was the chummiest place that I worked in and I really liked it better than any other. The working conditions, however, were poor; the kitchen was enormous and it took so many steps to collect the food for a *table d'hôte* dinner that a girl certainly earned the ten cent tip that she was quite sure to get from each patron.

The waitresses here had to carry out all the dirty dishes. That was very hard, for the loads were too heavy for any woman. Whenever I could, I hired Tom, the soda-fountain boy, to "bus" mine out for me. The manager was very unreasonable about this and I got many a scolding because I did not carry my dishes out promptly enough. One night he said to me, "This is your tray, Fannie, take it out," and then he piled on it a lot of dirty dishes that he had used for his own dinner although it was already entirely loaded and very heavy. I went into the kitchen and gave a

negro a dime to come and carry it out for me. One of the girls noticed this and said, " 'Van' will be awful mad if he knows you are hiring a nigger to work for you. He expects us to 'bus' out our own dishes."

"Van" was a good individual type of manager, kindly at times and then again unreasonable. One night he would tell me to "pick up" people that were seated near each other and the next night he would scold me for doing it. He never permitted a girl to use her own intelligence. One night he stopped me on my way to the kitchen to get an order for a customer and sent me back for a tray of dirty dishes. "But," I said, "why keep the man waiting while I unload that tray of dishes. I can take it out later."

"You do as you are told," he said angrily, and his reply defined his attitude. He wished every one to obey his dictation, to recognize him as "boss" and never to dispute his position as master. The class of girl that he had working for him said meekly, "Yes, sir," and stormed behind his back. The waitress learns to accept what such a boss says without protest no matter how unjust he may be. She endures patiently until sometime when she is exhausted and her nerves are all on edge; then she throws discretion to the winds, tells him what she thinks of him and is fired. Whenever there was a woman who had something to

do with the management, the girls were more contented and got along better together. Women are given credit for being naggers, but I did not find this true in the restaurant world.

Thousands of people are eating food prepared under the filthiest conditions, and it was only in places where there was a woman at the head that I found any attempt at cleanliness. At such places also, the food had more individuality. Women are not as competent executives as men, but the reason is because they have not yet been long enough in the business world. Neither do women shave the margin of profit so close, but on the whole they make better managers of eating places than men and I believe that in the very near future this field will be given over entirely to them.

CHAPTER X

THE WORK OF THE WAITRESS

THE work of the waitress differs in the different types of restaurants and depends also upon whether she is a long or short-hour girl. The short-hour girl does little or no side work, but spends all of her time in waiting upon people while to the long-hour girls falls all the drudgery called in waitress language "side work."

In the hash-house, however, even the long-hour girl puts in the greater part of her time in waiting. This is because the hash house serves meals continuously all day and all night. Short-hour girls come on only to handle the noon rush and the waiting at all other times is done by the long-hour girl. Most of the side work is done by Polish girls called porters who are hired for the purpose and the waitress in her leisure moments merely folds napkins, or wipes and fills sugar bowls, pepper and salt shakers, or catsup bottles.

In the tea room there is much more side work, tables to reset, silver to clean, glassware to wash

and wipe, linen to count, and, in some places the dining-room to sweep.

In the Men's Grill at Usher Lane's there seemed to be little except side work. Each long-hour girl was given a section to clean; *i.e.,* a certain number of chairs, tables, booths, and buffets, two booths with a large table and two extra chairs in each besides the leather seats and woodwork, one large round table with six chairs, fifteen small tables with two chairs each, and a big party room containing an immense table and eighteen chairs. I also cleaned the woodwork and windows in this room. The tables and buffets had to be washed and the chairs and woodwork thoroughly dusted.

When this was done I put linen on all the tables: *i.e.,* centerpieces, plate doilies, and napkins, and then counted out silver and glasses for each table. This meant the counting and placing of sixty knives, sixty forks, sixty large service spoons, sixty tea spoons, sixty butter spreaders, sixty glasses, and sixty napkins and plate doilies.

After this task was finished I was expected to go to the kitchen to wipe sugar bowls or silver, and to pick chicken from bones or to shell peas, until eleven-thirty.

After dinner at three o'clock the girls all had certain jobs assigned to them as side work and these took from 3 until 5 P. M. My job was to clean and fill three hundred sugar bowls. Another

girl cleaned ash trays, another salt and pepper shakers.

In fact almost the entire day at Lane's was spent in doing side work, only a couple of hours daily being devoted to actual waiting. I imagine that the men who go there have little idea of the amount of labor it takes to get ready for them before they come and to clean up after them when they leave. When a man pays fifty cents for a tiny chicken pie made up of a cover of puff paste, some gravy and a few bits of chicken, he is not paying for the ingredients in that pie; he is paying for the side work that has been done in the room where that pie is being served. The pie itself may be worth ten cents, the remaining forty cents pays for the service and the furnishings.

The hardest thing that the waitress has to contend with is the rush and this is to be met in every kind of restaurant at meal time, and I do not know whether it is worse at the hash house where the men keep up a constant clamor but are content to have you throw the food down on the counter and let them eat it in the midst of the dirty dishes that you cannot get time to remove, or at Usher Lane's where if you fail to remember the square of peppermint that should accompany his finger-bowl, the wrathful gentleman will forget your tip.

But in any place the rush is nerve wracking.

Your success in handling orders depends not only upon your own swiftness but upon that of the chef and pantry girl and also upon their mood at the time when you arrive. Chefs are usually good natured as well as efficient, but pantry maids are slow and stupid. The exceptions to this rule were the Greek cook at Chiros' when I was there, who screamed angrily at us in Dago lingo and the pantry maid at the Hayden Square, a pretty rosy-cheeked girl who was both swift of hand and sweet of disposition.

The working conditions in the kitchen during the rush hour were worse at Lane's than at any other place that I worked. It was necessary to have so many dishes on which to serve the food and so many frills. Every little sprig of parsley, every tiny dish of relish, every little doilie of paper lace, meant a long delay, and when you had your tray all set up with the accessories, you had to stand in line an interminable time before the cooks filled your orders and another interminable time before the checker checked you out. The men get very impatient waiting, but the remark of one of the girls one day explains the situation. "It isn't because we are such bum hashers, it's the way this kitchen is run."

The reason this kitchen is so poorly managed is because all the kitchen help are women who can cook, but who have no ability to manage.

They are paid from $4.00 to $7.00 or at most $10.00 or $12.00 (depending upon length of service with the company) per week, and naturally the most efficient women do not care for these jobs.

Another great occupational difficulty of the waitress is the lack of sufficient dishes, linen, and silver. I found this true in every place I worked except the Hayden Square Café, where there was always plenty. Of the hash houses, White and McCreary's was the best equipped. At the Café des Reflections the girls spent half their time running all over the dining-room in search of napkins, spoons, or glasses, or in washing dishes in the kitchen when about to serve an order.

The work of the waitress may be classified as casual labor. Occasionally a waitress stays a year or even several years in a place, but such instances are the exceptions. Fully 90 per cent. of the waitresses whom I questioned told me they had spent at most only a few months at each job.

There is a variety of reasons for this. In the first place it is easy for a waitress to be hired. She is required to give no references and she may not be asked where she has worked before. Sometimes she works weeks in a place without being asked to give her full name and her address. She is known simply as May or Susie. If the manager

or the head waitress happens to be in need of help the waitress gets a job. She keeps it as long as she gives satisfaction or as long as she can get along with her fellow workers. In some places a girl cannot keep a job unless she meets with the approval of the cook. Quarrels are frequent between waitresses and between waitresses and those higher in authority, the "boss" or perhaps the cashier.

Sometimes the waitress is laid off because some more attractive girl has applied for her job. This was what happened to Millie who was working at the Taylor Café. A dashing blond applied for a job in the afternoon and so pleased the eye of the young Greek who ran the place that Millie was laid off that night. To be laid off was for Millie a serious misfortune for she was a divorced woman with two children to support, and the loss of even one day's work meant a great deal to her.

The girls themselves, however, quit on the slightest pretext. A girl will work a few months at a good job, save some money, and then take a vacation and spend it all. She takes the gambler's chance on getting as good a job when she is ready to go back to work.

The work of the waitress is also seasonal in character as well as casual. In the summer there is always plenty of work. The summer hotels, amusement parks, golf clubs, and excursion steam-

ers are all running then and require a great number of waitresses. The proprietor in the Loop has a hard time to secure enough help to handle his trade. But in the fall conditions are reversed, the proprietor has his innings. He has his choice of the most attractive and efficient girls, and the others have a hard pull to get through the winter.

One day in the spring an old, broken waitress said to me, "There ain't no chance for an old hen to get a job now, but," she added gleefully, "summer is coming, and then we'll get even, they'll be glad to get us."

The wages of the waitress are about the same as those received by the ordinary office girl or typist, and a little better than those of the shop girl. For example, the steady girl in any type of restaurant receives not less than $8.00 per week for ten hours' work per day and more often she receives $10.00, and since the war, many places are paying as high as $11.00 and $12.00 per week. The only exception that I know is Usher Lane's where the steady girl is paid only $6.00.

The dinner girl in the Loop is paid $4.00, $4.50 or $5.00 per week for three hours' work, the wages being a little less in the places where the tips are best. The two meal girl in the café is paid $6.00 or $7.00 per week and the supper girl in the neighborhood restaurant receives $4.50 or even $5.50 per week for three hours' work. The

wages are a little better in the restaurants outside the Loop. This is because the waitress prefers to work in the Loop as she is then downtown where there is life and excitement and near the Alliance or the Union which are her clubs, and where she meets her friends when her work is over.

The golf clubs and resorts pay the steady girls during the summer wages ranging from $30.00 to $45.00 per month with room and board. These places also need extra girls for week ends and holidays and pay $2.50 or $3.00 per day and carfare.

During the summer many of the girls work "extra" in the Loop as dinner girls; *i.e.,* they are sent out by the Alliance in answer to telephone calls to fill temporary vacancies. In this way the waitress is sure of 75 cents or $1.00 in wages for three hours' work and she can count on working every day that she goes to the Alliance for a job. This, with the $5.00 or $6.00 which she can earn in the week end insures her of an income of $9.00 or $10.00 every week.

But the waitress does not depend upon her wages alone for her income. The tips she receives are in some instances as great as and in some greater than her wages, and she receives tips in almost every place where she works although some places are better for tips than others,

the café and the neighborhood restaurant being generally recognized as the best places in which to make tips.

The wages of the steady girl are not fair in proportion to the amount of labor which she performs. She does all the side work, puts in more than three times as many hours and receives only twice as much in wages as the short-hour girl. To be sure she is given three meals a day, but the short-hour girl is given two. The short-hour girl works only at the time when there is the best chance of making tips.

This injustice is particularly noticeable at Lane's, where the short-hour girl receives $4.00 for three and a half hours' work and has a better chance to make tips because she spends a half hour more in actual waiting than the long-hour girl does. The girls themselves spoke of this but I could not find out why the steady girl stood for it.

Often a girl works a dinner job in the Loop and also a supper job out south or north at a neighborhood restaurant. In this way she avoids the side work, has two or three hours off in the afternoon, and makes more money.

The waitress is markedly individualistic in her attitude toward life, and the status of her occupation as it exists today tends towards the individualistic. She does only what she has to do to

earn her wages and her only real interest is in the tip. In her work she does not often consider the house, the manager, nor her fellow workers, but herself only, and she seldom hesitates to advance her own interests at the expense of others. For example, one evening at the Café des Reflections, I went out into the kitchen before the supper rush began and washed and wiped a number of spoons and brought them in to set up my tables. But before I could use them, a girl came along and grabbed up every one. I ran after her and said indignantly, "Those are my spoons, I had to wash them myself!"

"Well, they are mine now," she said with a laugh, and she would not give them back.

And often after your tables are all set up with glasses, silver, and napkins, a girl from another part of the room will come and steal your set-ups when your back is turned. Such a thing as team work among waitresses is unknown.

Another time I said to a girl, "It is a shame to use these nice linen napkins for side towels."

"We should worry!" she answered, with a careless shrug of her shoulders.

The work of the waitress, because it is so irregular in character, because it can be entered upon at any time without much previous training, and because the waitress can quit a job today and be very sure that she can get another just as good

tomorrow, has but little disciplinary value. The attitude of the employer is an important factor also. He is too ready to discharge his help at the slightest provocation. Consequently they have no sense of security or permanence.

The work of the waitress, however, could be organized upon a distinctly social basis, and there might be great opportunities in this occupation if the waitress could be made to see the value of the individual to society, if her occupation could be made more creative.

I noticed that the girls who worked in the Men's Grill at Usher Lane's had a more social and less individualistic attitude toward their work than at any other place, at least where I had worked, and the ones who had worked there for any length of time were actually interested in working for the house. This was due to the attitude of their employer, who was a woman of character and refinement. She made them feel that they were part of a great organization and got them to look upon their work as a profession. She did not nag at them as most male employers do, but after clearly defining the work, placed the responsibility of its performance upon them.

The work of the waitress does not rank very high in the occupational scale. The waitress herself is ashamed of her job, and tries to conceal from her friends that she is a waitress. "What's

the use of letting everybody know that you are a hasher?" she will say. And by working in the Loop or in some place far from her own neighborhood, she can easily conceal the fact that she is "hashing" for a living. This is particularly easy for the married woman, who usually works only as a short-hour girl.

I can, however, see possibilities in the occupation of waitress, although first there must be a change in the attitude of the employer and a recognition of length of service. Then a better class of girl might go into the work and the standards of the girl already in will be improved. The "hiring and firing" of today is productive of great economic waste.

During my investigation, I have met one educated waitress, a graduate of an Eastern college. She belonged to the Alliance and worked in the Loop because she needed to earn her living. "I can earn just as much money and have a great deal more freedom than I could as an ordinary teacher and I meet more interesting people," she said, when I asked her why she was in the work, and she continued, "In the East you will find many college girls working as waitresses in the better class of places, but you do not find them here."

But while the income of the waitress, made up as it is of wages and tips, is much better than that

of the office or shop girl and compares very favorably with that of the average teacher, stenographer, or well-paid saleswoman, she seldom saves any money, and is more often "broke" than women in other occupations. It is not that the wages of the waitress are too much. She can not live a decent life on less. She is dependent entirely upon her own resources, and does not, like the shop girl and the office girl "live at home." She needs all she makes. But what she needs more is education and a different attitude upon the part of the public towards her occupation.

CHAPTER XI

WHERE THE WAITRESS COMES FROM

THERE is an astonishing uniformity in the conditions which prevail in the life of the waitress. This is particularly true in regard to her place of origin. She usually comes from a small town in Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, or some state not too far away, and is herself of American birth although she may be of foreign parentage. She often speaks with an accent which betrays this parentage. Her father may have been a cement contractor, or a small-town merchant, but he has probably been merely a laboring man. She may be of any age. There are grandmothers in the waitress group. They look surprisingly young and take a keen interest in life. But whether a waitress is an adolescent or a patriarch, she is a girl still, for all women in the waitress world are known as girls and are called by their Christian names.

The waitress becomes a waitress because she needs the money that she earns. If she is married, she needs it to supplement the income of her

husband in providing for the household needs, while if she is unmarried or divorced, she depends entirely upon her earnings for support.

I have questioned hundreds of girls during the course of my investigation and I think it is a safe guess that approximately 50 per cent. of them were married, 40 per cent. were divorced and the remaining 10 per cent. were unmarried. I found no "old maids."

Short-hour girls are usually, but not always, married women and long-hour girls single or divorced. The married waitress has often been a domestic servant before marriage, the divorced waitress has married between the ages of sixteen and twenty and her marriage has not proved a success. Her husband may have been a drunkard, a follower of other women, or perhaps merely an economic failure, either incapable or unwilling to support a wife. But all alike, the married, the divorced, and the young girl, have entered the life because it offers the most lucrative occupation open to untrained and uneducated women.

"I never went further than the fourth grade," said a girl one morning.

"I never went to school three months in my whole life," said another.

"Did you ever hear of a waitress that had an education?" said the first, "If she had, she wouldn't be in the business."

Such a girl has a choice of but few callings, and she chooses that of the waitress because of its greater remuneration and its greater freedom. "I'd never do housework again," said a girl. "You might as well be a nun, it's so darn lonesome." It is the group life that makes the appeal, the sociability and the comradeship during working hours.

The divorced or unmarried waitress looks a little scornfully upon the married waitress and the latter, if she is wise, does not mention her husband.

"It makes me sick to hear folks braggin' about their men when they have to go out and work," said a German girl one day.

There are distinctions among waitresses just as there are among all classes of women, and distinction is based upon the sort of clothes a girl wears more than upon anything else. Of course it is the skillful waitress who earns the money to buy the clothes. Efficiency is a factor here as elsewhere. Silk stockings, a feather, a georgette waist, a brooch, and above all, a diamond ring, are the sort of things that make distinction in the waitress group, as they do elsewhere for that matter.

There is a certain type of waitress who wishes to be considered refined. She dresses in good taste, tries to speak good English, but betrays

herself by the frequent use of "God" and "Hell" in her conversation. Letty, the Irish girl, at the Hayden Square, was of this type. The night she reproved some girls who were using vulgar language, "Girls," said she, "refined people do not use such language." She also corrected a girl who said, "I have et." But a little later I heard her say to another girl:

"For God's sake leave that pin at home. It looks as though you got it at a ten-cent store. I wouldn't wear it to a dog-fight. Fannie is the only one here that has got a decent pin. Anyone can see that hers is a real antique."

At home the waitress may have been a Catholic, a Lutheran, a Methodist, she may have been a member of a conventional small-town group, but when she comes to the city, she puts aside the standards that she has inherited and sets up new ones for herself. These girls say, "When we stayed at home we did not know anything about life. Now we are working for a living, we know everything."

For example, Evylin, a Catholic girl, who was divorced from her husband, said, "What did I get by gettin' married honest by the priest instead of just runnin' off with some man. I've had nothing but trouble—a bad husband, hard work, and nothing to live on. I've kept straight on account of my little girl, but I don't blame the girls if they

go with some man even if they ain't married. What's the use of gettin' married! As long as it's just one man and you like the fellow, I don't see no harm in it. But," she added as an afterthought, "I don't hold to this layin' up with just every old man that comes along."

And another little girl said to me, "When I was at home, I used to sit every night by the table and knit, but when I came to the city, it wasn't three weeks before I was goin' out every night to the movies and shows just like all the other girls."

The waitress reads almost nothing except perhaps the newspaper (she likes the murders and the evening story especially), and that only in a superficial way, and she does not talk much about what she reads but about things that are to her of more importance. She talks about her work, about the meanness of the "boss" or the head waitress, about the patrons who "stick her up" (fail to give her a tip), about her clothes, how much she pays for this or that, about some girl who works with her and whom she does not like, about the divorces that are being obtained by the members of her group, about her "friend" (lover) and about all sorts of human, personal things. Personalities represent 99 per cent. of all she thinks worth mentioning in conversation.

The waitress who is married spends a short

time whenever she can spare it at the Alliance, or the Union, where she meets others for a little gossip and relaxation, and once in a while she goes to a movie or to a dance. But most of the time that she is not working as a waitress she spends in household duties. For example, a girl at Lane's was allowed to go home one day at three o'clock instead of staying until 5.15. She was very happy about it. "Now I can start my washing by daylight!" she exclaimed joyfully. "I do hate washing after dark."

For the unmarried waitress home is usually a furnished room and she spends only the time there that is necessary for washing, ironing, and mending her clothes. Practically all her leisure is spent at the movies, cabarets, and restaurants, where she goes with her "friend" or with some other girl. There is nothing that a waitress enjoys more than a meal where she can sit down at a table and be waited upon.

The waitress seeks constant amusement in her leisure time because the rush of her work keys her up to a nervous pitch where she demands more stimulation. But her pleasures do not make for efficiency, they have little or no stability and productivity and are a great waste.

When Lillie, on the first day that I was a waitress, said "Eatin' is the main business," she emphasized an important value in the waitress world.

And I am inclined to think that it is more of a "main business" with all of us than we are willing to admit. Anyone who doubts this statement might try being a waitress or a "bus" boy and see how she or he enjoys a dish of stew and potatoes, with rolls and coffee, eaten from a counter in a hash house.

The girls like to work where they are given good food. The Advertisers' Club is a favorite because you can have "any old thing to eat, even dessert."

"I like to go to East Meadows," some one will say, "Gee, we had chicken and ice cream."

These girls eat what is left on the plates of the patrons of the restaurant. A bit of choice meat or fish, some salad, a fragment of pie or a spoonful of ice cream is eagerly gobbled up and choked down in the kitchen during the rush, even though it is against the rules to eat during working hours. At lunch time the girls bargain with the cook for something a little unusual and steal pie and French pastry and eat it surreptitiously behind the manager's back.

The religion of the waitress world is a free one. "Think what you please, it makes no difference to me," is the attitude. The oath of initiation into the Alliance is prefaced by this statement, "What you are about to swear will not interfere with your nationality or with your religion."

I once overheard this conversation between girls:

"And so while my father was over to the saloon my little brother had three convulsions and died," said the first girl. "Ma sent for him and when he came home and saw that my little brother was dead, he took on something awful. He said to Ma that it was a punishment that God had sent him because he had went so much to the saloon instead of stayin' with her and helpin' with the housework and the children and after that for three years he never went near a saloon."

"And you think that your little brother died for a punishment to your father," said the other. "Well, I don't. I don't believe that there is a God sendin' out punishments to folks. I think things happen that are goin' to happen, that it's your destiny, and no matter what you do, you can't change what is goin' to happen to you."

The moral sentiments, the prevailing ideas of rights and duties of this group are difficult to define. It seems to me that the waitress is a genuine Bohemian. Her life is spent in trying to escape definitions and to avoid suppressions. She has little idea of honor nor of personal obligation. She cannot be depended upon to keep her word.

One day Hilda wanted me to go to White and McCreary's to work lunch.

"Indeed I won't go there!" I said indignantly. "Do you know what he did? Once I went there and he hired me for a steady lunch job, but it was only ten o'clock so I said I'd do a little shopping and be back at eleven, and when I went back there he had hired another girl and he wouldn't give me the job."

"You couldn't blame him, Fannie," said Hilda, "he thought you didn't intend to come back."

"But I said I would."

"That makes no difference. The word of a waitress ain't nothin'. Nine girls out of ten would never have showed up," answered Hilda, and then continued coaxingly, "you go on over there and work lunch, Fannie, he needs a girl awful bad and he has always treated us right. Now you belong to the Alliance; you'll get your money all right even if you don't work. Just so long as you are sent out by the Alliance, you ain't comin' in off the streets no more and askin' for jobs.

"No, you ain't a streetwalker no more, Fannie," laughed a girl who stood near.

One Sunday when I was working at Laconia Park where only Alliance girls are employed, I was standing at the end of a line waiting for my tray to be checked when a girl coming from the kitchen called me to open the door for her. She

had a very heavy tray, so I quickly opened the door and stood holding it until she had passed through.

She took my place in the line. I attempted to pass her but she blocked the narrow passage with her body.

"I was willing to hold the door for you, but I'm not going to give you my place in the line," I said indignantly. "Let me pass!"

She stubbornly held her position. I raged. "Did you ever see anything to beat that?" I exclaimed to the girls who stood near.

"Aw, shut up!" said the girl, "makin' such a fuss because I asked you to open the door. Can't you do a little thing like that for a person without makin' a fuss!"

"I'm not making a fuss about the door," I protested, "I want my place in the line."

"Well, you won't get it," she said.

And I did not. The checker looked at me reprovingly, and said:

"If you can't get along with the other girls out here, you better not come."

The members of the Alliance swear in their oath of initiation to help each other in every way that they can. But the extreme individualism of the waitress is responsible for a lack of honor and honesty even in her dealing with other members of the Alliance.

Another vice peculiar to the group is stealing. The girls steal even from each other. You cannot leave an apron at the Alliance and go back in an hour and find it there. Some one stole the nickel plate from under the sewing machine that one of the girls had loaned the Alliance, although this could have been of no possible value to the thief. And one day I left a ragged coat outside my locker at a restaurant where I was working, and a girl said:

"Better put it in your locker, honey, someone will steal it."

"But it is so old, no one could possibly want it."

"That makes no difference, someone will steal it just for the fun of stealin' it."

And I felt that that very girl might do so, though she liked me and had a better coat than mine.

It is only occasionally that you will find a girl who is willing to tell you about the good places to work. Even though she knows that she has no chance there, she is reluctant about "tipping off" another to a good thing.

These girls are great admirers of female beauty. One day I went to the Art Institute with a disreputable looking old waitress of the street-walker type, and she was enthusiastic about the nude statues of beautiful women. "I would love

to touch her," said this girl as we stood before a Venus mounted high on a pedestal, "Aren't her arms lovely, and look at her breast!"

One night at the Hayden Square a pretty girl was changing her waist in the dressing-room and another went up to her and passed her hands caressingly over the bare arms and breast of the pretty girl and said, "Pretty! pretty!" and her eyes were full of pleasure.

One day I was out with a waitress and we stepped in at a restaurant for a lunch. She was abominable to the girl who brought our order, found fault with everything, and finally sent the order back to the kitchen. I was much amused for I could see that she was acting over again a scene that had occurred between her and a patron, this time with the positions reversed.

We always mixed a good deal of gossip with our side-work at Lane's. One afternoon some one referred to the day that Helen Morris came down to the store drunk. There was no criticism of Helen because she was drunk, but indignation was expressed against her friends for permitting her to come to her job in that condition. "No man would let a pal of his go to his job like that and her friends ought to have been ashamed of themselves," was the indignant verdict of the group.

I did not find much drinking in this group as a rule, although one girl said one day, "I quit

my job because they wouldn't give me a day off for the dance. When I go to a dance, I get stewed, and when I'm stewed, I don't care a damn about any old job. I wanted a day to sober up in and they wouldn't give it to me so I quit."

Vulgar language and the use of profanity are the most glaring vices. The filthy language is the outgrowth of the low ideal of sex around which centers the great interest. There is not much that is complex about the waitress and her behavior can easily be reduced to the two fundamental appetites of food hunger and sex hunger. She is intelligent, efficient, industrious, dishonest, and dishonorable, loose in her sex relations, impatient of the restraints put upon her by the members of the group from which she came (parents, relatives) and inclined to set up new standards for herself and to make a new group life in which these standards are approved.

CHAPTER XII

HARVEST TIME

As soon as summer began, the Alliance became a lonesome place. There were no girls sitting around waiting for jobs, for there were more jobs than there were girls to fill them. Hilda had contracts to send girls to half a dozen of the best golf clubs, including Lakewood and East Meadows, and the manager at Laconia Park hired all his waitresses through her.

"Summer is our harvest time," said Hilda. Every day she refused dozens of calls for help. The girls went like harvest hands from one job to another, from the city restaurant to the country club, and back again to the city restaurant, staying but a short time in each place and reaping a harvest of high wages for the emergency work that they had been called in to perform. I, like the others, made the rounds and learned to know the summer time, as well as the winter time life of the waitress.

On the Fourth of July, Hilda had an order from East Meadows for thirty girls to work

"extra" at three dollars per day. I was one of the number chosen; so I arranged to meet one of the others who had been at East Meadows on Decoration Day. I wore the black uniform of the waitress with white collar and cuffs. Molly was late in meeting me and I stood for a long time waiting for her. When she came, two other girls who knew her but whom I did not know, joined us.

Molly did not introduce us. Introductions are not customary in the waitress world. One of the girls said:

"I knew this lady was goin' out there the minute I seen her," and she meant me. Always after that I carried my black waist and white collars and cuffs in a small handbag just as the other girls did and wore a white waist. No matter how tired she is, the waitress never fails to change her black waist for a white one.

Every little while we were joined by two or three more girls until in all there were about twenty of us. When we reached Damon Avenue we left the L and took the surface car for several miles. At the end of the line, we got off and walked for a mile and a half over fields and golf links to the East Meadows Golf Club.

Molly and I walked together. "I wouldn't mind comin' out on these jobs if I had someone like you to pal around with," said she.

"Don't you pal with the Alliance girls?" I asked.

"No, I don't," she replied, "they want to know too damn much!" and then she added.

"The girls are too cliquey. I'm a new member and they don't notice me half the time. Decoration Day I worked out here with a lot of them and it was raining cats and dogs when we got through work and them girls went and left me to come home alone across these fields. I got a ride with a chauffeur back to the car line or I'd have had to stay all night."

By this time we had reached the club house. We trailed around and entered the kitchen door. In the back hall we were met by the locker woman of the club who gave us aprons. These we put on in a dirty bathroom where we were sent to wash our hands and arrange our hair. Perhaps servants do not demand cleanliness; their toilets and baths are always filthy. Later in the day I saw the quarters of the club members and they were as clean and attractive as those in a first-class hotel.

We had two meals at East Meadows, both of which were served in a dirty little basement room. For lunch we had stewed chicken, potatoes, bread and butter, and tea; and for dinner, roast pork, peas, bread and butter, and tea. The guests had very appetizing meals with vegetables, salad and

dessert. The waitresses looked longingly at the good things that they were not allowed to have and hidden behind a door or in a dark corner of the porch gulped down hastily the scraps that were left on the plates of the guests.

There were not many guests at lunch and the work was easy, but there were two hundred reservations for dinner and it took the entire afternoon to prepare the dining-room. No one could have any idea of the amount of work necessary unless she took an active part in the preparation.

When it came time to serve dinner, the girls were all tired out and, as there was no hope of tips, all were dull and spiritless. They plodded mechanically through the task of serving dinner and rejoiced when, at nine o'clock, they were each paid three dollars and dismissed.

As we walked back over the golf links towards the car line, everyone was quiet, everyone was tired, and everyone was disposed to look gloomily at life in spite of the beauty of the night. One or two spoke of the moonlight and the freshness of the country air, but for the most part, they walked on in silence.

About half-way to the car line, a chauffeur halted his big touring car beside us and called out cordially:

"Jump in, girls, I'll take you the rest of the way."

We jumped in gladly. The girls began to laugh and talk. One put her arms around the chauffeur's neck and cried:

"Ain't he the lovely man!"

Several leaned over and whispered to him, but I did not catch their words.

The chauffeur expanded and puffed himself out with satisfaction over this feminine adoration.

"I bet you can't guess where I been all day!" he announced jovially.

And in response to the chorus of "Where? Come on now, tell us!" he replied:

"I took the folks out to the club this morning and then I beat it for the House-of-Many-Mirrors."

"Oh, was you there!" cried the girls enviously. "I wish you'd taken me!"

"What is the House-of-Many-Mirrors?" I asked, and added, "it seems to me that I have heard of it."

"Have you only heard of it?" exclaimed the chauffeur in surprise. "Ain't you never been there?"

"It's a road house," volunteered someone.

"Did any of you ever work there?"

"Work there! I should say not! It ain't a place to go to work, it's a place to go for pleasure. I was there a year ago today with a fellow and I stayed all day and all night."

"————mother————!" sang out a respectable looking old girl in spectacles, and vile words fell wearily from her lips. "Ain't it lucky we met this fellow! That God damn club ought to have a bus to take us back and forth. Expectin' us to work all day and then tramp through them fields at this time o' night. And they think they're swells!"

"Aw, shut up!" said another girl. "The folks at East Meadows ain't swells, they're just nice people."

I sat with Molly on the way home. "It's a good thing we met that fellow when we was goin' instead of comin'," said she, "or we'd have spent the day at the House-of-Many-Mirrors instead of at the East Meadows Golf Club."

One summer morning I went to the Alliance about eleven o'clock. As I opened the door Hilda said, "You go with Emily Mills to Cutler Brothers to work lunch."

Emily Mills was seated in front of Hilda's desk. She was a small, slender, rather pretty girl, with a dull, listless expression, heavy sunken eyes, and a skin covered with ugly pimples.

"I don't want to work, Hilda," said she.

"Shame on you, Emily Mills!" said Hilda, and added coaxingly, "They pay a dollar for lunch!"

"I should worry about their lousy old dollar," said Emily Mills.

"Come on now, girls," urged Hilda, "we don't want to stick Mattie up." Mattie, the head waitress at Cutler Brothers, was an Alliance girl.

Emily pouted, yawned, stretched herself, and rose reluctantly from her seat. "If it wasn't for Mattie I wouldn't go," said she.

Emily and I walked over together.

"Oh, gee! I'm sick o' workin'," said she, "if I'd listened to my sweetheart and got married last week, I wouldn't have to work."

"Who is your sweetheart?" I asked.

"He is a chauffeur," replied Emily, and then she went on to tell me that he was a divorced man, that she was a divorced woman, and the mother of a child three years old.

The employees' lunch room at Cutler Brothers is a dull and uninteresting place in which to work. The trays are very heavy, the dishes thick and cumbersome, and there are no tips. The waitresses here are called upon to wipe dishes after the meal is over and that is the main reason why Cutler Brothers is not popular at the Alliance.

While Emily and I were washing and wiping the silver and glasses, the colored elevator boy came into the kitchen to eat his lunch.

"Say," he called to us, "I'd like to a-died a-laughin' after I brought you up in the elevator this morning! I thought you was the boss's sister

and then I found out you was just a waitress. But you look just like her."

"If she is good looking, I'm sure I don't mind," I said.

The elevator boy stared at me. "I'd like to a-died a-laughin'," he repeated, and walked away chuckling to himself.

The waitresses at Cutler Brothers are not allowed to eat until all the work is done. The food had looked appetizing while we were serving it, but by the time we were ready to eat it, it was cold and messy looking. I did not eat, but waited for Emily.

When we reached the street, I said to her, "Are you going back to the Alliance to get a supper job?"

"Not much!" she replied, "I'm going home and take my baby to the park."

It was during the summer that I worked for a week at the Taylor Restaurant. The proprietors of this place were Greeks who spoke scarcely intelligible English and who turned over the management of the dining-room to a pert, ignorant young girl of nineteen or twenty whom they had engaged as cashier. She sat enthroned upon a high stool behind the cash register at the cigar counter in the front of the room, chewed gum, and queened it over the other girls. With

the crook of her little finger, or the pointing of her pencil she would summon the waitresses to her cigar counter and with severity lay down her commands. Every night I made at least one trip across the room to be told:

"I don't like them aperns, Fannie, them ain't waitress aprens," or "Pull your cap further over your hair in front, Fannie," or "Take out all your 'dead' dishes before you take fresh orders. Nothin' makes a customer so sick as dead dishes layin' round. You'll have to learn to work faster."

I tried to take her reproofs meekly and feigned an air of demure respect, but I could not always suppress my amusement. Finally towards the end of the week, she lost all patience with me.

"You ain't got nuthin' on me, Fannie!" she burst forth, "to make you act so stuck up. When it comes to looks and clothes both I can put it over on you—see!!"

"Yes, ma'am," I answered meekly, although I was choking with laughter. At the end of the week when I went for my wages she said as she handed my envelope to me:

"You're laid off, Fannie." She gave me what she intended to be a "withering" glance and added, "and, look here, if you try to knock me after you get out-o'-here, I'll get you—See!!—I'll get you and don't you forget it!"

It was while I was at the Taylor that I met with an interesting experience. Just at eight o'clock one night when we supper girls were carrying out our last dead dishes, a waitress grabbed me by the arm and hissed into my ear, "My God, Fannie! the kitchen girl's dying out in the alley. Let's go out and watch her!"

Down went my dishes on to the counter and I quickly followed the girl through the kitchen into the back alley. There on the ground lay the Polish kitchen girl twitching and moaning in helpless agony and around her stood an audience of considerable size. The cook was there with a saucepan in his hand, another kitchen girl stood winding her dish towel around her arm, the proprietor, who had been helping the cook with the evening rush, had run out with the perspiration dripping from the end of his nose, and several waitresses, the driver of a Yellow Cab, various small boys, and passers-by from the street had gathered around the arena in which the kitchen girl was the sole performer. Somebody brought out a chair and a couple of the men dragged the poor kitchen girl up upon it. She hung limp over its back with froth dripping from her lips. She continued to moan.

"They may kill her," I thought. "What ought I to do?"

I had had the short course in nursing at St.

Luke's hospital in the spring that had been given to prospective Nurses' Aids, but none of the knowledge which I had acquired seemed to fit this particular case. However, I knew that something ought to be done. I stepped into the circle and asserted myself.

"I think you should take her to a hospital," I said.

The women in the party all protested. One of the waitresses began to rub the arms of the kitchen girl, who continued to moan. The Greek proprietor talked the matter over with the Yellow Cabby and decided to adopt my suggestion.

"Will you go with her?" he asked.

The cabby backed his taxi into the alley and soon I found myself inside with the moaning Polish girl in my arms, her coat and hat, together with mine, in a heap on the floor. I lurched from side to side as the cab sped on and the kitchen girl grew heavy as I held her. From time to time I wiped her lips with my handkerchief. The street lights made gay the summer night, the street cars ground past us, and people gazed in at us curiously when our cab was halted by the traffic of the streets. Finally the neighborhood through which we were passing began to look familiar and I realized that we were within a block or two of St. Luke's.

I leaned forward and tapped the Greek proprietor on the shoulder. "Why not take her to St. Luke's?" I asked.

"But she is a county case," said the cabby.

"But St. Luke's takes charity cases."

The cabby took council with the Greek, then directed his taxi around to the Indiana Avenue entrance of St. Luke's, where charity cases are received.

We lifted the Polish girl into the wheel chair that was sent out and took her to the examining room. She had revived somewhat by this time and was able to answer after a fashion, the questions that were put to her. After making the examination, the pompous little interne announced, "Mild case of heat prostration, scarcely a hospital case."

"But you will keep her for the night, won't you? She lives alone in a furnished room."

"Yes, we'll keep her," said he, "but it's scarcely worth mussing up our beds when they are no worse than this. All she needs is a rest." He bustled the poor kitchen girl into the wheel chair, rang for a nurse, and gave orders to have the patient taken to one of the wards. His whole manner said plainly, "I'm doing this as a favor to you."

"Thank you," I said meekly, "I'm sorry I

troubled you needlessly, but she seemed very ill," and gathering up the garments of the kitchen girl, I trailed apologetically behind the wheel chair.

Soon the girl was tucked into a little white bed in a dimly lighted ward where other women patients slept in huddled heaps in other small white beds.

"Good-night," I whispered softly as I bent over her, "I will come for you early in the morning. You stay here till I come."

The kitchen girl caught my hand and pulled me down close beside her. "You bring my brown crepe de chine dress. I wear it home in the morning, and my other shoes, my hat, they at the restaurant."

It was nearly eleven o'clock. I was not anxious for a long weary trip back on the L to the restaurant.

"But your kitchen dress is all right to go home in," I said. It was a neat blue gingham.

The girl shook her head. "I not go on the street car in that," said she. "I *so* ashamed. You get brown crepe de chine."

I looked down at the swollen, shapeless mass that was the kitchen girl's body, at the dull ugly face with its small eyes and wisps of thin brown hair. Even she must have a crepe de chine dress or be ashamed to ride on the street car!

Obediently I returned to the restaurant for the

clothes and the next morning I escorted away from St. Luke's a proud kitchen girl decked out in silk stockings, slippers, a hat with roses around the crown and a brown crepe de chine dress. In one silk stocking, tied up in an old rag, were thirty dollars, all she had in the world.

. . . . . .

It was also during the summer that Hilda offered me a job at Lakewood. "It's to wait in the help's dining-room, Fannie," said she.

I hesitated, then decided that it would not be wise to work at Lakewood because several of the girls who had been in my class at St. Luke's were members of the Lakewood Club. Dottie, one of the Alliance girls, who was in the office at the time Hilda spoke to me, misunderstood my hesitation.

"It's a good job, Fannie," said she, "and you make good tips; better than in the guests' dining-room. I worked there one summer and my chum waited on the guests and we had a bet up which would make the most money. Say, at the end of a month, she hadn't made a cent and I had fourteen dollars. The chauffeurs and maids will tip when the guests won't."

I did not, however, go to Lakewood.

Laconia Park was the favorite week-end resort of the waitress who preferred spending the summer in town to signing up for the season at a golf

club. I worked there several week ends. It is a popular summer garden which offers an excellent opera in an open-air theater and dancing in an open pavilion as well as food and soft drinks. It is located on the North Shore several miles out of the city and is in the midst of a beautiful wood. During the summer of 1917 it was crowded on Saturdays and Sundays with all classes of people.

Every week-end Hilda booked twenty or thirty girls for "extra" work at Laconia. We worked on Saturdays from five in the afternoon until midnight and on Sundays from two until midnight. We received five dollars in wages and some girls made as much more in tips. I was not one of the most efficient girls, but I could count on making seven or eight dollars every week-end. We liked to work at Laconia because the money was good but the work itself was unusually difficult. We had to walk a long distance with our trays because the kitchen was far from the dining-rooms and so also were the soda fountains and cashier's desk where we paid in all of our checks. This last was most important, for if a customer escaped without payment, we were held responsible. No small part of our job was keeping an eye on the patron.

One rainy Sunday night when nearly every one

was at the concert or dancing in the open-air pavilion, two soldier boys strayed into the little deserted dining-room where I was stationed. They were tall, clean, healthy-looking country boys.

"Why aren't you dancing?" I asked as I took their order for sandwiches and coffee.

"We don't know anybody," said one, "and we haven't got the nerve to walk up to a girl we don't know and ask her for a dance."

I registered sympathy and when I returned with the orders, one boy said, "Can't you dance with us?"

I shook my head, "I'm here to work."

"Don't you have any time off?"

"Oh, yes, I work here only Saturdays and Sundays."

"Can't you come out to the camp to see us some night—say next Tuesday night, and bring a girl friend? It's awful lonesome out at that camp without any girls."

"Oh, I can't," I said.

"Come on now, please," pleaded the boy, "You bring another girl and come; we have from seven until ten off every night and we can go for a walk. It's awful pretty out by the camp."

"I'm sorry, but I live out South and it's too far for me to come."

"You mean you don't like the looks of us. You

know we haven't got much money and I bet you've got a fellow with lots of dough that can show you a good time."

"No, that's not it," I protested, laughing. "You are all right, but I haven't time."

"See!" he said to the other boy with a grimace, "that's the way they turn us down."

They rose to go, but as they walked off, the boy turned and said, "If you knew how lonesome we are, you'd take pity on us and come."

CHAPTER XIII

THE KOSHER SALAMI

"KOSHER Salami and potato salad," said the first patron whose order I took on the morning that I went to work in the Jewish restaurant at South Wabash Avenue.

I must have looked a little puzzled, for he added:

"If you don't know what that is, just give my order to the cook, he will understand."

Then I remembered that one day when I was visiting the Chicago stockyards, I had looked down into the killing pens and there I had seen a tall, black-robed, priestly figure moving about among the cattle. Upon his head was a close-fitting skull cap and in his right hand was a huge sharp-pointed knife.

"It is the day that we have set aside for the killing of the Jewish meat," my guide had explained.

As I watched him, the priestly figure leaned over a cow that lay prostrate at his feet, his lips murmured a few words of an ancient ritual and

then, with nice precision he jabbed the point of the knife into the jugular vein of the animal. The blood spurted out like a stream from the nozzle of a hose. Wiping his blade he passed on to another victim.

This priestly figure was the "Shohet" of the Jews, a man who had studied the art of killing according to a Mosaic law. The meat killed by him is called "Kosher" meat. The orthodox Jew will eat no other and the orthodox Jew is so numerous in Chicago that certain days are given him in the pens at the yard for the killing of his meat. This meat is afterwards kept separate from other meat, labelled "Kosher," and sent into the Jewish retail markets.

This restaurant which I shall call the Kosher Salami, was owned and managed by Jews when I worked there, but was patronized by Jews and Gentiles in about equal numbers. It was on account of the Jews that Kosher meats were served and there was no butter except by request.

This restaurant, which was in a basement, was of the café type. The same men came day after day and sat in little groups at the same tables and here the *gemütlichkeit* of the German restaurant prevailed. This relation between the patron and the waitress, was friendly, familiar, suggestive of even greater intimacy. Practically every man left a tip every day, but the tip was always a nickel.

This, so the girls said, was a New York custom. The proprietor used to sit with the same girl two days in succession and on one of these two days he gave her a nickel. He never was known to leave a tip both days.

The same girl patrons came day after day also. They were mostly Jewish girls, stenographers, typists, and workers in the wholesale millinery houses which are near Michigan Avenue. The waitresses hated them because they never knew what they wanted, said they would take this or that, and when the waitress brought it, guessed they wouldn't have it after all, but would take this other instead. Or, if satisfied with the order, would think of something they wanted that would necessitate another trip to the kitchen from whence the first order had just been brought. They demanded all sorts of attentions and never left a tip.

The waitresses at the Kosher Salami were very pretty girls. They gave a great deal of attention to dress and were neat and smart in their appearance. I became well acquainted with several of them.

Mayme, a pretty blond, told me that she had a lover who had rented a flat for her to live in with her little sister who was feeble-minded. She was very proud of her home and talked of the curtains she was making and of the plans she had

for furnishing it, just as any married woman might have done.

Nellie was a beautiful girl with a cameo-like profile. She had a daughter thirteen years old whom she was trying to keep in school. In talking with me about how difficult it was for her to do this, she said:

"Everyone thinks I'm foolish not to put her to work but she's nothing but a baby. I don't want to take her out of school yet."

Nellie was a decent girl but she laughed at the smutty stories of the men who came to the Kosher Salami and let them hold her hand and slap her on the back.

"It makes you sick," said she, "but it gets the money."

Rachel, the only Jewish waitress, was most unpopular with the others. One day, when she and they were comparing expense accounts, she said that she paid eleven dollars a month for her flat but that it had stove heat. The others said they paid as high as twenty-eight and thirty dollars for theirs which had steam heat.

Then Rachel went on to say that she earned ten or twelve dollars a week and her husband earned twenty-five and that, though they had been married only a year, they had two hundred dollars in the bank. "And we help our folks, too," said she. "We give three dollars a week to his par-

ents and three dollars a week to my mother. Mother has ten children and there are four little ones still at home. The older ones all help mother with the expenses, but it is not enough and mother has to have help from the "Charities."

"And you let the Charities help your mother when you've got two hundred dollars in the bank!" exclaimed Nellie indignantly. "Before I'd let the Charities help my mother, I'd take that two hundred dollars out of the bank quick and hand it to her!"

"But I have to think of my husband," protested Rachel.

"Husband, nothin'!" chimed in Mayme, "you can get a dozen husbands—I guess I know, I've had two—but you can only have one mother. When it's a choice between a husband and a mother, a husband can go to Hell!"

"But I have to think of myself and my husband," repeated Rachel, stubbornly holding her position. "We are both willing to give our folks what we think we can afford, but not all. Every two weeks my husband brings me fifty dollars and I put ten in the bank and I send twelve to our folks and the rest we use with mine to live on!"

"And you live in a flat with stove heat and call that living," sniffed Mayme contemptuously. "Well, I don't. We can only live once and I'm going to have comforts. I have steam heat and

hot water any old time of the day or night and I got electric lights. Any old time I live in a flat with stove heat just to save a little money!"

"Well, do you think I want to work always?" asked Rachel, and added, "Of course I don't! I want my husband should get ahead in the world. I don't want he should always be a clerk in a lawyer's office at twenty-five dollars a week. He is a graduate of Northwestern University and I want he should have a business of his own and get ahead in the world. While I am young, I will work and help him."

"And let the Charities take care of your little brothers and you with two hundred dollars in the bank!" said Nellie, and there was infinite scorn in her voice.

"And why not?" asked Rachel, "they have good care." And to excuse herself a little, she added, "I give what my husband is willing I should give."

"To Hell with your husband!" cried Mayme, "the fellow I'm goin' with helps me take care of my little sister!"

"But you ain't married, honey," protested Rachel, "when it's speaking of husbands, I've got a good one but marriage is hard and fast, girlie; it's not like having a sweetheart. Wait till you're married to him and see!"

"Gee, none of us saves any money except you, Rachel," said Ruth, a quiet little girl who had

been listening as she washed and wiped the sugar bowls. "A waitress throws her money up in the air and what sticks to the ceiling she puts in the bank, and what comes down she spends—tra! la!"

Rachel said that she was true to her husband but she talked freely about intimate matters with the men who sat at her tables. It was this way that she made her good tips.

As a matter of fact, all of the girls catered to this taste. They laughed at the dirty jokes of their patrons and listened to their obscene stories and retold them among themselves when they were doing their side work. They showed each other verses of obscene poetry. They pointed out to each other men who indulged secretly in perverse sexual practices. And yet these men looked and acted much as other people do. A casual observer eating in this restaurant could not have picked them out.

One day three young men sat down at one of my tables. As I was returning from the kitchen with their orders, I heard one of them say:

"Gee, you should have been with us the other night. We had some French girls and they were great!"

"Hush!" said one of the others when he saw me.

The first speaker blushed and they discontinued the conversation. They left me thirty-five cents in

tips but, though they came every day to the restaurant they never again sat at my station.

Another day at lunch time, a very young girl sat down at one of my tables which had a seating capacity for eight. Several men were already seated at this table and they seemed to know the girl. She was very beautiful, slender and graceful, with wonderful eyes and a bewitching expression made up of dimples and natural charm. In a black dress and huge hat she made an exquisite picture. The men paid her silly extravagant compliments. She smiled, beamed, enjoyed them all.

When she rose to go, in getting her coat off a hook, she leaned over one of the men and her body touched his at full length. Her dress was very low and her breast showed as she leaned over. He exchanged significant glances with the other men.

Six men and one silly little girl, unusually beautiful and attractive. She captivated the sandwich man also so that he stood with his knife poised in the air, unable to cut another slice of bread until she had gone, and even the waitresses said:

"Ain't she a whiz! Gee, she is some classy kid!"

The scullions in the public eating-places are vile beyond description both in their language and in their personal habits. People who eat in res-

taurants do not realize that their food is being handled and prepared by the lowest type of men that can be found in a great city. They are the down-and-outers, the scum that comes from the lodging-house districts where are huddled together that enormous host of the city's "homeless" men.

Women will no longer do the kitchen work in restaurants. Some time ago it was done by Irish girls. Then the Irish girls became waitresses or moved up even higher, and were replaced by the women of other nationalities. When I first started to be a waitress, there were still many Polish and Lithuanian girls who were doing this work, but they were being rapidly replaced by men, until, when I left the restaurant world there were but few women in the kitchens.

CHAPTER XIV

THE MEADOW LARK

A SHORT distance from Fairfield Park, one of Chicago's north shore suburbs, the Meadow Lark Golf Club stands apart in a lively country spot. Wild flowers are in the woods and meadows just behind it and close-cropped golf links roll out before it. It is an example of the beauty that an architect can create out of wood and stone and of the harmony that can be realized by an artistic assembling of furnishings in accord with the structure as a whole. With its wide, cool rooms, its broad screen porches, its brick-tiled grill, its deep-cushioned chairs, its capacious couches, it extends a hearty welcome to the arriving guest and tempts him to prolong his stay far beyond the limits of his first intention. It delights the eye with its soft-toned rugs and harmonious hangings as much as the cool, soft breezes that blow through the open French windows refresh the skin. Truly an ideal place in which to loaf and sip iced lemonade on a balmy summer day after eighteen holes of strenuous golf.

I arrived, a waitress sent out by the Alliance, at this paradise of golfers, late one afternoon in July. My taxi drew up at the front entrance. For me to arrive in a taxi was not out of keeping with my rôle of waitress, for taxis, like cabarets and Russian Tea Rooms, are patronized extensively by waitresses. Suitcase in hand, I entered the open door. No one was visible, so I walked through the spacious rooms until I found the kitchen.

"My goodness, Fannie!" said Rebecca, the pantry maid, a few days later, "I thought you were a guest and I was just going to offer you a glass of water and dust off a chair for you when you said you were the new waitress."

I was not a little pleased at Rebecca's recognition for throughout my experiences I had been chagrined at the success of my disguise which was no disguise after all. I had merely put on an apron and said that I was a waitress and immediately every one accepted me as one.

After dinner the night of my arrival, the manager told me to stay downstairs "on watch." He also showed me how to lock up and informed me that this would be my job every third night. I sat around on the porch reading a book and enjoying the marvelous beauty of the place. Later the manager joined me for a time. "I was just about to give up in despair and put on Japs here,"

said he. "I've had Union girls and Alliance girls, and they either will not stay or they will not work while they are here. They tell me that they are waitresses and they refuse to do anything except waiting. Now a girl here has to do other things as well; she has to take care of the dining-room and wait on the guests when they come in; she has to make lemonade for them and serve soft drinks from the pantry. The hours are long and indefinite in a place like this, but the work is not hard. Surely in your Alliance of five hundred members, there must be a few girls who would appreciate an environment like this."

I thought to myself, "How little you understand the waitress!" But I was spared the necessity of an answer for just then the five guests who were staying for the night returned from motoring and I became very busy getting ice water, showing them to their rooms, and attending to their many little wants. At ten o'clock I was free to retire. I had been assigned a clean little room containing a white iron bed, a dresser, and a chair, and there I locked myself in. As I dosed off to sleep, I heard one of the women servants splashing about in the bathroom which was next to my room. I was glad to discover the next day that this bath was clean and reserved for the women servants only.

The following morning, I arose at half past

six and after a somewhat hasty toilet, breakfasted at seven o'clock in the servants' dining-room. The food was good and everything about the meal was very clean, in marked contrast with conditions in the other restaurant in which I had worked. On the big porch I served breakfast to the five guests and in the dining room to the family of three. Then I swept and dusted and put in order the immense dining room and also the dining porch. The manager had been without help for several days and now I was the only waitress. The room was very dirty and by the time I had it cleaned, it was time to serve luncheon. There were several extra guests for this meal and I was busy until half past two. The day was very warm and when I had straightened the dining room, I prepared to go upstairs for a rest. The manager then asked me to clean the men's grill.

"I am tired," I said, "I will do it tomorrow."

He showed that he was angry. I did not allow that to bother me in the least but calmly walked up the back stairs. "Too much Alliance and too much Union!" I heard him mutter as he turned away.

At half past five I was back on duty. There were eleven guests for dinner besides the family and I did not get through until half past nine. The meals had to be served very carefully here

and "service" takes time. For some reason the manager's wife did not eat at the regular time and I was asked to serve her after I had finished with all the others. I was doing the work of two waitresses but that seemed to entitle me to no consideration either from the guests or the manager. "What would happen to the girls if there were no Alliance or no Union!" I thought indignantly. "Their organizations protect them from injustice. No wonder girls will not work here!"

But I did not keep my independent attitude long. I became intensely interested in the work and I learned to like the manager. He was a nervous man, quick tempered and often unreasonable, but it was because he failed to understand the waitress. He loved the Meadow Lark Golf Club as though he had created it. He who had always been the manager of hotels and restaurants had longed to be an architect. The beauty of Meadow Lark appealed to his æsthetic sensibility and he was overjoyed to find that I appreciated it as he did. I soon saw that he was being hard driven, harder even than he was driving us, by the directors of the club who did not understand his problems any better than he understood ours. The house committee kept warning him to keep down expenses; he was getting along

with an insufficient kitchen force but was expected to turn out only the best results.

I found myself working even longer hours than those demanded by the manager. The artistic perfection of the place made so strong an appeal that I could not endure to see the tables badly arranged nor the dining room out of order. I gathered and arranged flowers to place before the mirrors on the buffets because of the pleasure it gave me to see them there. I followed up the extra girls who came in for the week end to see that they cleaned up well and did not leave spilled water upon the tables or buffets, and I kept an eye on the entire dining room in anticipation of all needs, instead of concentrating upon my own individual problem.

The members of Meadow Lark appeared to be wealthy Americans, better bred than the patrons of the average Loop restaurant although they said "Was you?" frequently and their conversations at meals were dull and stupid. I have a little Jewish friend who lives in a small western city and once when she was visiting me, she remarked, "These people here look just like those we see on the streets back home." And I, like my little friend, found the members of the Meadow Lark Club just like the society folks I had known back home in my little western city.

The women were pathetic creatures. They seemed to have no real interest in life. The men had their golf which they really enjoyed but most of the women sat around with their knitting talking about trivial matters, plainly bored to death with each other. At dinner, in spite of the cocktails and highballs, both men and women were listless and uninterested, and yet these dinners cost the host fifty or seventy-five dollars. And when they danced it was without joy or spontaneity.

I wondered why they had the club house, why the beautiful furnishings and perfect appointments, why they spent so much money on pleasure that was obviously no pleasure. And I decided that perhaps if the women had some real work to do, some real interest in life, then pleasure would be a genuine recreation. For I am convinced that there are thousands of people, like the members of the Meadow Lark Club, who are spending thousands of dollars every day on pleasure that brings them no real joy nor satisfaction, and I cannot help speculating on what might be accomplished if this great stream of wasted energy could be directed along other channels.

The manager of Meadow Lark was subjected to many petty annoyances. Members were supposed to make reservations in advance for meals

and rooms but they dropped in at any time without warning and expected every attention. One Saturday night there were only forty reservations for dinner and between sixty and seventy people came. There was no time in which to get in extra help; the kitchen help that had been working in peace and harmony began to quarrel among themselves. The manager was distracted and chaos reigned. I did the work of three waitresses besides keeping an eye on the entire dining room and trying to expedite things in the kitchen. I made the iced tea and also served the drinks from the locker rooms at the tables where there were extra waitresses. The members ate on serenely unconscious of the havoc in the kitchen.

We had provided wild flowers as decorations for this dinner and when I was arranging them for the tables, Kitty, a waitress, said to me, "Can't these folks afford any good flowers instead of them weeds!"

Kitty was not alone in her views. Just before dinner one of the hostesses of the evening, a slender, fragile young matron with a dead white skin and discontented lips, came to me and demanded:

"Which is my table?"

"This one near the door."

"Take those flowers off," said she pettishly,

"I've brought my own," and she handed me a huge tissue covered bouquet.

I moved the wild flowers to a buffet and substituted on her table, the pink rosebuds. All evening they nodded there as pale, as fragile, as altogether artificial as the young woman herself.

Another hostess entered and when she saw the table we had prepared for her, she said:

"I won't have it, it is square and I want a round one."

One morning I was serving breakfast to a man alone on the porch and he said to me:

"You stay out here all the time, don't you?"

"Yes."

"Pretty soft!" said he, "that's what I call pretty soft!"

"Yes," I answered, "if working from the time I get up in the morning until I go to bed at night for not quite nine dollars a week is soft, then this is a soft job. Perhaps you have never tried to see how much you could buy for nine dollars and found out how little."

"There may be something in that," said he, and glancing at the magazine I had in my hand, he added, "What are you reading?"

"The New Republic."

"Never heard of it. Where did you get it?"

"I brought it with me. There isn't anything

to read here, not even the daily paper. Doesn't anyone in this club ever read?"

He looked at me over his spectacles.

"I guess not," he answered, "we aren't the reading kind. Is that a socialist magazine? I suppose you are a socialist."

Just then the manager called to me. I found out later why. Kitty had said to him:

"Fannie is out there on the porch tryin' to make a date with one of the members."

This girl had come to Meadow Lark after I had been there alone for four days. With her advent, a different moral tone pervaded the servants' dining room. She diffused about her an atmosphere of cynicism and indecency that had been entirely absent until her coming. The men servants, who had been perfectly respectful while only decent women were present, responded instantly to the new tone even though she was old and ugly, had several teeth missing, was short-sighted, and had feet bulging with bunions.

Every time she saw me exchanging a civil word with a guest, she leered at me and said:

"How much will you get out of that one, Fannie?" or, "Can't you do enough business in the kitchen without goin' into the parlor?" A world of social intercourse that did not involve the perverted sex game did not exist for her.

The other servants at Meadow Lark were of the upper class type. All were English except one American pantry maid and the Swedish cook, whose husband, the locker man, was, however, a Cockney. The conversations in their dining room were most intelligent. They discussed the questions of the day and lamented because there were no newspapers at Meadow Lark.

One day when one of the pantry maids had been severely reprimanded by the manager, she said at the dinner table:

"I thank God every day that my husband my four boys are dead. We think it is hard to see them die but God knows! Living troubles are harder to bear. You don't have to worry about those that are dead."

"He was mean to you today, Mary," said the cook sympathetically, "but I was glad that you did not answer him back. I make it a rule never to answer back nor to act sore no matter what a boss says nor how unreasonable he is. I answer back nice and pleasant. It is the only way to keep a job."

On this particular day everything had gone wrong. Alfred, the dishwasher, had been recovering from a spree with which he had celebrated his "off" day, and his nerves were completely out of tune. He slammed the dishes around until

we wondered how there could be any whole one left. Finally the manager discharged him.

When he was ready to go, he came back to the kitchen for his money. He was dressed in his best and carried his working clothes in a little bundle under his arm. They were all he had in the world. A working man "dressed up" is always a sight to move one to tears. Poor Alfred haunted me all day; I have often wondered since what becomes of these poor derelicts.

In all of the golf clubs there is a rule against tipping. This is not fair to the steady girls. The extra girls who were hired for Saturday and Sunday at Meadow Lark received $2.50 per day and their car fare. I worked for $35.00 per month, not quite four dollars more per week and I put in all of my time and had all of the responsibility and all of the drudgery. I also had to pay my own railroad fare.

The position of a steady girl at a club is like that of a house servant. I averaged thirteen or fourteen hours per day at Meadow Lark and never had any time to call my own if I remained in the building. Even when I went to my room to dress or to rest a few moments, someone was sure to call me to ask about something.

A golf club is a lonely place for a waitress for she has no resources within herself. She does

not read and when her work is done, she longs for the dance hall or the movie, or for the excitement of merely mingling with the crowds on the streets. And so for the same reasons that it is difficult to keep house servants, it is difficult to get a girl to work "steady" at a golf club. She would rather earn $5.00 at the week end, pick up a dollar at a lunch job in the city a few days a week when she feels like work and have her freedom and the life of the city.

Then, too, at a golf club the attitude of the patron towards the waitress is more conventionalized. To him the waitress is a servant. "I don't want to work there no more," said a girl in speaking of a certain club, "those folks out there never see you. They treat you like so much dirt." Then she added, "There is no place like the city to work. In any old hash house, folks'll talk to you and act as though you was somebody and slip you a dime once in a while. None o' them swell clubs for me! You ain't anybody and you ain't got a chance to pick up even a nickel."

CHAPTER XV

THE WAITRESSES' ALLIANCE

THE Waitresses' Alliance was organized in March, 1915. The objects of this Alliance as set forth in the Constitution and By-Laws are as follows:—

1—To provide a common meeting place for women who make their living by serving in Restaurants, Lunch Rooms, Cafés, Hotels, and other public eating places, or by assisting caterers at social affairs;

2—To improve its members mentally, physically, and morally, and to obtain for its members proper working conditions;

3—To facilitate the honorable and profitable transaction of business by the members of the Organization, as a whole, with employers;

4—To protect the individual members from unjust treatment on the part of unscruplous persons;

5—To confer with employers and arbitrate differences and otherwise advance the Industrial Welfare of all its members;

6—To create a community of interests and to maintain a reasonable standard of wages and working conditions;

7—To do everything possible to obtain employment for its members.

In 1917 when I was a member, the Alliance was located in a room in one of the large buildings on West Washington Street. This room was large and pleasant and furnished cheerfully with rugs, pictures, chairs, and cretonne window curtains.

There were approximately 500 members in the Alliance at this time. The initiation fee was $2.00 and the dues thereafter were fifty cents per month.

Mrs. Hilda McLean, a retired waitress, was financial secretary and general manager. The Alliance paid her a salary of $10.00 per week which was raised to $15.00 during July and August. The restaurant managers, when in need of a waitress, telephoned Hilda and she did her best to fill all orders. She had calls for all sorts of girls but she did her greatest amount of business in supplying extra girls for lunch jobs. I have known her to send out as many as twenty girls in less than forty-five minutes to different places. In winter sometimes there were not enough jobs for all so the first comers got them,

but in summer there were always more jobs than were girls to fill them. Lunch jobs had been paying seventy-five cents but during the summer of 1917, Hilda made the employers pay one dollar for an extra lunch girl.

Sometimes it was hard to get the girls to go to certain places. "I don't want to work there," some one would say, "I want to work where I can at least pick up one extra dime." "Not that place for me, I can't stand that fellow," or "Do you think I'll work under that damn red head?" (meaning the head waitress), or "I don't want to go there, the trays are too heavy."

But Hilda was a diplomat and before they knew it, she had overcome their objections, they had an Alliance card in their hands, and were out in the hall pushing the button for the elevator. Very often they would fail to "show up" at the place where they had been sent, and then Hilda would have trouble in appeasing the irate managers and not losing the house for the Alliance. Sometimes the girls would go but fail to make good on the job and this gave the Alliance a bad name. "We have lost that house," Hilda would say, "Caroline spoiled it for us; she ought to be ashamed of herself!" And if Caroline continued to spoil jobs, she would be asked to resign from the Alliance.

Most of the girls, however, took a great interest in their Alliance and were jealous of its prestige. One afternoon a South Side manager phoned for an extra supper girl. "Who wants to go?" asked Hilda, as she hung up the receiver.

"I do," said a nice looking young girl, "but I will have to go home first and clean up."

"You should worry," remarked someone, "you're clean enough, and anyway it's just for tonight."

"I guess not," said the young girl, "do you know what they say about us Alliance girls? They say we are just filthy dirty," and she scrambled into her coat and rushed out of the door.

Every Thursday at three o'clock there was a business meeting at the Alliance, at which the president presided. The order of business was much the same as that of any other Woman's Club and was carried on in a very able manner. When the business had been transacted, the new members were asked to state what the Alliance had done for them, and, in much the same manner as the convert at the revival meeting, the new member gave her experience.

"I am glad to tell what the Alliance has done for me," said a pretty Swedish girl one Thursday. "I came to the city six months ago and I

walked the streets broke because I couldn't get a job. Then a girl in a restaurant where I tried to get work told me about the Alliance and I came up here to Hilda. 'But I have no money to pay the initiation fee!' I said to Hilda and she said, 'That makes no difference, you work first and pay afterwards.' And ever since I have had work, all I could do, and a nice job all summer at Lakewood. And now I have money and I can pay the Alliance and that is all what the Alliance has done for me," and the pretty Swedish girl smiled through her tears as she sat down amid loud applause.

The Alliance is an employment agency but it has another equally important function, it provides a common meeting place for the exchange of ideas. Every afternoon the members gather at the Alliance to visit and gossip together. The short-hour girl is off duty for the day at half past two each day and even the steady girl gets a little time off during the afternoon and she always has one whole afternoon during the week for herself. This room is the natural meeting place for these girls who live in such widely scattered homes that anything like house to house visiting is impossible for them. The conversations at these meetings set the standards for the group.

For example a waitress will say, "I can't stay

any longer today, girls, I've got to take my kid to the dentist. I don't want her to have teeth like mine. Isn't it great how the schools teach such things now? Nobody ever told me how to take care of my teeth when I was a kid." And this will open up a discussion about rules of health in which ideas of real value are passed from one to another.

Through the Alliance are arranged the dances and card parties that provide entertainment and social recognition for the group. I was a member of the committee which arranges the Alliance card party in the fall of 1917. Some of the girls wanted to have drinks served but Hilda would not permit it. "We won't have no drinks," said she. "People think that waitresses can't have a respectable party and we will show them. This is going to be a nice quiet party and we are going to invite the reporter from the *Tribune* to come and give us a write up."

And a nice quiet party it was with dancing for the younger members, a "Bunco" game for the older ones, and a generous supper of potato salad, spaghetti and layer cake for all at midnight. Everyone wore a paper cap and blew a noise-making instrument but for soberness and respectability, it could compete with any small town church social.

The Alliance is of inestimable value to the girls. "When we first come to the city," they say, "and do not know about the Alliance, we must walk the streets for jobs or go to the employment agencies and they skin us to the bone." The Alliance makes a quick connection between the girl and the job, and moreover, Hilda makes it her business to know the character of the place which sends in the call for help and she sends out the girls best suited to the job. The old, the inexperienced, the ugly, and the inefficient, are kept as a reserve force to send out to fill gaps and to meet emergency calls. That is why the service at banquets and extra luncheons is always poor. But so clever is Hilda in her collective bargaining for the group, that these reserve workers are paid a wage when they do work which is sufficient to enable them to live although they may have employment only part time. In summer Hilda keeps them moving constantly and it is only in the dull winter months that there is any danger of hardship. Surplus in wages provides a form of unemployment insurance.

When an Alliance member cannot get work and is in real need, the organization helps her out. Also when she is ill, the sick committee calls upon her and sees to it that she is properly provided for. At every Thursday meeting a

basket is passed and each girl present drops in a few pennies which are used to buy flowers for the members who are ill.

The Alliance compels the patronage of the restaurant keeper. It is a great convenience for him to be able to step to the telephone, call the Alliance, and in less than half an hour have a waitress there in an apron ready for work. He loses no time in waiting for an answer to his advertisement in the newspaper or for some girl to come in off the street in answer to the sign "Waitress Wanted," which he has put up in his window.

Not more than 25 per cent of the waitresses in Chicago are organized yet those who are, are a power in themselves. If all were organized they would indeed be an enormous force. The Waitresses' Union and Waitresses' Alliance have won for the group the eight hour working day and the relatively high wages. The girls on the outside accept the benefits which these organized workers have won for them.

I shall not attempt to tell anything about the Waitresses' Union because I did not belong to it. After I became an office executive I tried as an outsider to get some information about it. The attempt was worse than useless. I was told things that I knew absolutely were not true. I gave it up, and as this book is an account of what I know I have judged it wiser to make no state-

ments whatever about the Waitresses' Union, except that in my opinion there is little or no difference between it and the Alliance. I worked with Alliance girls, Union girls, and "Scabs," and the cultural status of all was the same but the most intelligent, forceful and efficient girls belonged to one or the other of these organizations.

CHAPTER XVI

TIPPING

I RECEIVED my first tip on the first day that I was a waitress. A shabby, dissipated wreck of a man came in and sat down on one of the stools at my counter. To my surprise, he ordered a forty-five cent meal. I became very busy and I did not at once remove his dirty dishes. A boy sat down on the stool vacated by this man and I took his order. When I was attempting to clear a place for it, I saw a greasy, dirty nickel on the counter. The boy gave it a little push towards me and said, "I guess this is yours."

"I thought it was yours," I said, and then I realized that I had been given a tip. I knew that it was customary to tip a waitress in more fashionable eating places but that it was done here, was a great surprise to me. Presently two mail carriers came in, one white and one colored, and each, when he left, gave me a dime. I had tipped colored boys many times but it was indeed a new experience to have one tip me.

The second place that I worked was Foyle's

Tea Shop. One day when the waitresses were eating their lunch in the rear of the room, a plainly dressed woman entered and sat down at a table near the front.

"There's a lady at your table, Florence," said a waitress to a pretty girl who sat next to her.

"I don't care if there is," said Florence, "I'm tired and I'm going to eat my lunch. Somebody else can wait on her."

In a few minutes she returned to the waitresses' table and showed, lying on the palm of her hand, a bright new dime.

"Now aren't you sorry, Florence?" she asked, and then added, "All she asked for was a bowl of soup."

"Just my luck!" said Florence with a little grimace as she went on eating.

"That's a movie ticket," said the other girl as she slid the dime into her apron pocket.

But it was not until I reached the Café des Reflections that I began to realize the enormous importance of the tip in the life of the waitress. It was nothing unusual there, for a two meal girl to make $18.00 or $20.00 per week in tips, and the steady girl made still more. I myself, as a two meal girl, made $8.15 in tips in five days, and I was inexperienced and had the poorest station in the house.

"Did you make good today, girlie?" someone would always ask.

"I would tell them how much I made.

"Well, you are new. You will do better after a while. The new girl always gets the front station and it's no good."

A station is a group of tables that is assigned to you. A back station is always better than a front station and "deuces" (tables for two) are better than larger tables. "I've got them three deuces at the back of the room," a girl will say, "and every time I have a couple sittin' at them three deuces, that means three quarters for me. You'd probably only get ten cents, where I'd get a quarter, because you ain't on to the game."

"I can even get a tip out of a woman," another will say. "I just stick around and act so darn nice that she can't resist. But whether it's a man or a woman, you got to stick around and act like you expected it, or you won't get no tip."

I was never very successful at working people for tips and never made over half what the other girls made. One night at Laconia Park I had an order from a man for a pitcher of Apollinaris water and grape juice. Owing to the wretched service at the soda fountain, I was a long time getting it. Later the same man ordered a round of sandwiches for his party, five in number.

"That was a nice party you had, kid," said

the girl next to me, "how much did you get out of them?"

"Twenty cents," I answered.

"You didn't know how to handle him, then. I've had him several times and he's good for a half or a dollar always."

And one morning at breakfast in the servants' dining room, at the Meadow Lark Golf Club, the Cockney who had charge of the men's lockers, said to me, "Well, Fannie, how much did Mr. L. come through with last night in the dining room?"

"Not a cent," I said cheerfully.

"Well then," he said, "you didn't give him service."

I protested mildly here.

"Well then, you didn't talk to him. That's where you lost out. You should have talked to him about his game. (The Cockney said "gyme.") No matter whether you know anything about golf or not you must say, 'And how many did you make it in today?' and if he says '87,' you say, 'well, now that's not bad, you'll do better next time, no doubt, Mr. L., and anyway you've got a magnificent swing. I was looking out just as you drove off the ninth tee and I must say, Mr. L., you've surely got a swing.' Now that's the talk that brings them. After that he'd be good for a half or maybe a dollar. He expects a waitress to entertain him at dinner."

During my experience as a waitress, I learned that a girl can make tips anywhere if she understands the game. I also learned that the poor man tips just as frequently as the rich man and that his tips are just as large. The standard tip all over Chicago is a dime whether it be at a hash house or at Usher Lane's exclusive tea room for men.

In fact at Usher Lane's I found the tips smaller and less frequent than at any other place where I worked. This was a matter of great importance to the waitress because the lunch service there lasts but two hours. Owing to the long distance to the kitchen, the poor management, and the number of dishes, doilies, finger bowls, and decorations required to serve a luncheon, it is impossible for the average girl to serve more than six or eight people in that time. Often men will sit at a girl's table and smoke and chat the entire two hours and then leave without giving her even a dime. Of course while the seats are occupied, she has no chance of getting other customers who might give her a tip.

Usually a man gives a tip graciously but sometimes he is quite disagreeable about it. One day a man at Lane's said to me, "I have no change, but if you will meet me at the cashier's desk, I will give you a dime."

"Oh, no, thank you," I said, "I'd rather not," and my face was scarlet.

"All right," he answered, and walked away. His whole manner had said plainly "I don't want to give you this tip. It is a great nuisance. I only give it because custom has decreed that I must."

However, there are men at Lane's who give generous tips and give them graciously. The very first man I waited on there gave me a quarter for serving him a seventy cent luncheon. But I got the quarter in exchange for a smile.

It was my first day and I was feeling very foolish and uncomfortable in my stiff collar and apron as I stood waiting for a customer. All around me were the sort of men I had been accustomed to meet socially. Now I was about to meet them a waitress. I was smiling at a joke I was having all to myself when an usher woke me up by saying, "Take that man's order."

I walked over to a nice looking young fellow and, in spite of myself, the smile wouldn't be suppressed as I tried demurely to take his order. He smiled back, although he did not know why, and the quarter was his token of appreciation.

Another day at Lane's two men came in about three o'clock in the afternoon and asked for luncheon. It was after hours for serving any-

thing hot but I went into the kitchen and persuaded the cook to give them some fish and vegetables. It was Friday and they had said that they were Catholics. I fixed up an appetizing luncheon for them and when I took it in they expressed a great deal of pleasure and asked me to draw up a chair and eat with them. I laughed and thanked them but said, "It isn't done here."

When a woman comes into a restaurant, the waitress slowly, and with a bored and disgusted air, takes the glass of water and the pat of butter from the sideboard and deposits in nonchalantly in front of the patroness' plate. Then more bored and more indifferent she stands hand on hip and service towel in hand and awaits the lady's order. And when it suits her convenience, she brings it.

The manager has a hard time to contend with this attitude. To him a woman is as profitable as a man. At the Junior Alliance one day a waitress from the Weymouth said, "Our boss won't stand for anything like that. He has fired more than one girl for lookin' disgusted when a woman sits down at her table."

But when a man comes into a restaurant, he always receives prompt attention. He represents the possibility of a tip. The man who gives the tip likes to give it. It gives him a feeling of generosity, of expansion; it establishes between

him and the girl to whom he gives it, a little feeling of intimacy. It is true that this sometimes leads to an undesirable familiarity but this is not the rule.

But if the waitress is disgusted with the woman who does not tip, her scorn for the man who forgets is unmitigated, "The damn cheap skate! if he doesn't want to tip, let him sit at a lunch counter. Believe me, if a guy comes to my table more than twice without leavin' a tip, he don't get no service from me."

The skillful waitress will not work in a place where the tips are not good. For this reason and because of the low wages, the most efficient girls are not to be found at a place like Lane's. A popular priced café is the place where the waitress can make money. In two hours, she can serve fifteen or twenty people because she need not stop for frills and finger bowls, and at least half of those served will give her a ten cent tip. She also receives very good wages in this sort of place because she serves so many people.

If tipping were abolished, the manager would have to increase the price of the food served so that the increase would cover the higher wages that he would be obliged to pay his waitresses. This would undoubtedly be more fair, as then the wages of the waitress would be paid by all instead of by a few. But I doubt if this is desired by the

patron and I know that it is not by the waitress.

I have asked every girl with whom I have had an intimate conversation how she feels about tipping and always the answer is the same, "I like to work where the 'side money' is good."

"Would you prefer to work where the 'side money' is good or where the wages are good?"

"I like to 'pick up' money," answers the girl.

I soon learned that the success of each day depended upon the tips. If the money had been good, then at night when we were ready to go home, there was laughter and gaiety in the little basement dressing room, but if it had not, then all was dull and spiritless.

Tipping is the gambling factor in the life of the waitress. It redeems her work from dull routine and drudgery and puts into it the problematical. It is the same thing that makes the man shake dice for his cigars instead of paying outright for them. To get a tip is, as William I. Thomas says, "like winning a game. It involves the same uncertainty. It has in it the element of chance, of luck; it is the getting something for nothing, the legitimate satisfaction of the gaming instinct, which is no more dormant in the female than in the male."

CHAPTER XVII

THE LURE OF DRESS

It was five o'clock and the two meal girls at the Café des Reflections had returned to the basement dressing room from the Russian Tea Room, the North American, or the States' restaurants, where they had spent their leisure time since half past two, and were rapidly changing street finery for demure black uniforms. Marietta was dancing gaily about in a flowered taffeta petticoat and pink crepe de chine camisole, Dolly was coaxing, with invisible hairpins, the two little curls on each temple to lie flat, and Mabel and Jennie and Maude and Lorraine were putting powder and lip stick wherever each thought it would be most effective.

"Look here, girls," cried Irene, a lovely tall girl, as she held up for inspection a clinging gorgette gown of a soft old rose shade.

Marietta stood still, Dolly gave her curls a finishing pat, and Mabel and Jennie and Maude and Lorraine stopped powdering their noses and

all gave little gasps of admiration and delight.

"Oh where did you get it, Irene?" they all cried as they drew up closely around the girl. And instinctively they put their hands on the dress and caressed it.

"It's lovely! just lovely!" someone said.

"And isn't it the sweetest shade!"

"How much did it cost you, Irene?"

"I don't dare tell," replied Irene. "It cost too much but I wanted it." And she began putting it tenderly away in its tissue paper wrappings.

"Whose your friend, Irene?" someone slipped into the conversation.

Irene gave a little shrug of her shoulders as she turned the key in the locker but she did not resent the suggestion.

The waitresses at the Café des Reflections were pretty girls, more the chorus girl than the servant type and, on the whole, they were pretty good imitators of their sisters whom we call "society girls." They tried to use correct English, attended the most expensive places of amusement, wanted only the smartest clothes, and bought them on twenty dollars a week.

On Easter Sunday evening a pretty woman who wore a beautiful gown of old blue taffeta and white kid shoes came to the Hayden Square Tea Room to dine with her husband.

"Oh, look at that girl, Fannie! Isn't that the loveliest dress!" whispered a young waitress named Louise.

The girl who wore the dress was about the same age as Louise but not so beautiful. Louise continued to look and to admire and I could see that she was envious. I assumed that she was asking herself questions something like these: "Why can I not have these things? I, too, am young and beautiful, full of life and the joy of living. I want the soft pretty things that make life for a woman. Why can this woman have them when I can not?"

The next night when it was time for us to go, Louise said to me, "Stop in at my room on your way home, Fannie, I want to show you my new coat."

Louise lived with some people of the laboring class, in a little flat over a grocery store. Her room was just big enough for a dresser, a bed, and a chair. The one little window, crowded up against a brick wall, let in only dingy unwholesome light and one felt that microbes, and even live insects, lurked in large numbers in the grimy corners and along the unclean mop boards. From an old fashioned wardrobe, Louise produced the new coat, and, putting it on, preened herself proudly before the slanting mirror of the dresser.

Cherry, one of the other girls who had come along with us, and I expressed our admiration. "It is a beauty, Louise!" we said, "and it couldn't be more becoming."

"How much did you pay for it?" asked Cherry.

"Only forty dollars," said Louise. "I got it on 55th Street. Down town it would have been forty-five or fifty."

She then pulled out a number of large pasteboard boxes from the wardrobe and drew from them new brown pumps, with silk stockings to match, a handsome new hat, and a pretty little silk dress, all in excellent taste. Very proud and happy she dressed up to show us. I could see that she felt sorry for me in my shabby black suit and her sympathy enhanced her own pleasure. Perhaps these clothes meant more to her because she had earned them, because they representd hours of hard work and endless anglings for tips. All her income was invested in clothes and one could see that in her life they were the supreme value.

"Where will you wear all of these things, Louise?" I asked.

"At the Woodlawn Café tomorrow night," she answered, beaming. "I have a date with Henry. If you come, you can see me all dressed up."

Cherry did not speak for a long time, merely

watching with envious eyes while Louise naïvely displayed herself, but finally she said, "Before I had the children, I used to have lots of nice clothes, too. Now I spend all my money on them."

I could see that Cherry deeply regretted this necessity.

There was the greatest rivalry in dress among these girls and they never lost an opportunity to impress one another with the superiority of an individual garment. One night at the Hayden Square, Letty was telling me about a fur coat that her husband had bought for her the previous winter for fifty dollars. "And it is lined throughout with satin, Fannie," said she.

"It is not, Fannie," said Louise, who had been listening to the conversation. "It is just plain lining." Then followed a discussion that might have been amusing if it had not been so serious. In conclusion, Letty said, "I'll wear it and show you, Fannie." But she never did.

Another day when they had all been getting new spring clothes which were their one absorbing topic of conversation, I said, "I'm not going to have any new clothes at all this spring, girls, perhaps you won't speak to me."

There was a most significant silence. Finally a plain Swedish girl said in deadly earnestness,

"I will, Fannie. Even if you come in rags, I will speak to you."

After another silence, Letty, the Irish girl, said, "I will speak to you, too, Fannie."

The others said nothing.

Another day Clara was telling us about meeting down-town a girl with whom she used to chum before she was married. "I haven't seen her since she was married. She had a baby in her arms and the way she was dressed! She looked awful shabby," said Clara.

"Why Clara," said the Swedish girl, "I would not have thought that of you."

"I have felt mean about it ever since," admitted Clara, "but she was so shabby that before I knew it, I just went by without speaking."

"You should have seen the bunch that went to East Meadow Decoration Day! Say, they was dirty and shabby, and their shoes was run down on the heels. Gee! I was ashamed to be seen with them!" Such remarks voice the sentiments of the girls themselves.

And there is every excuse for this attitude. The advertisements for "neat appearing girls as waitresses" mean well dressed girls. The waitress stands a better chance of getting a job if she is well dressed when she applies for it and a better chance of keeping it after she gets it. Good clothes secure for her recognition from her em-

ployers and among her mates. It is not what you are but what you wear that determines your social standing as a waitress.

That a girl should have pretty clothes that she may appear well in the eyes of her "friend" is of still greater importance. In the city where there are so many more women than men, the competition is very keen. She must be well dressed when she goes to the movie or to the cabaret or someone else will make a stronger appeal to the friend and she will lose him.

"You're a dandy, takin' my fellow away from me last night," is a remark that I have often heard in the little basement dressing rooms and the argument that would follow would be unreserved and bitter.

That a woman should spend all her money for clothes is most significant. The love of dress is unquestionably one of the most disorganizing factors in modern city life because of its individualistic character. My observations have led me to believe that not to have the pretty clothes is even more disorganizing for without them a girl can not hope to realize her personality.

As a matter of fact clothes are of great value in the eyes of every woman. She has certain beauty needs in this respect that must be satisfied. Even the intellectual woman, the woman with an ideal, finds it difficult to resist the fas-

cination of the dainty garment. She may give precedence to other values but the lure of dress must be reckoned with. In the life of the working girl it is small wonder that it is of such predominating importance.

The shopkeeper organizes his business in full appreciation of this value. Every woman, as she goes by his window feels, although, perhaps, subconsciously, just as did the little waitress, with whom I walked down State Street one day when she stopped in front of a window and said naïvely, "Oh, look at that blue suit! I would look cute in that!"

So each one of us is picking out a suit or a hat and saying to ourselves, "Oh, wouldn't I be lovely in that!"

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SEX GAME

RESTAURANTS want women who are young and good looking; the advertisements announce it and most managers insist on it. "There ain't no chance for an old hen, they all want chickens and they want 'em slender," is a remark which defines the situation. It is quite true that some restaurant managers prefer women with experience and do not assess personal charm at so high a value, for plain women last longer. The seasoned waitresses are likely to be rather stout, tight laced, efficient persons with a keen observing eye and a highly professional manner. But for the most part the girl who is good looking has her pick of the jobs, for everywhere the waitress is playing a game. It is this which makes the life, hard as it is, fascinating to her. It is a woman's game, the sex game.

The girls in the waitress world discussed their relationship with men with a candor that I cannot and shall not attempt to reproduce. At some places the game borders upon prostitution, al-

though not actual prostitution because the waitresses earn the necessaries of life for themselves. One day while I was there, a young girl came into the basement dressing room with her apron full of money. She sat down on a bench and displayed it. There were several one dollar bills.

"Them ain't tips," laughed another girl, "them is dates, ain't they, Nell?"

"Sure," said Nell.

"Oh, Nell!" teased the girl, "ain't you the cheap skate! Is that all you get, a dollar!"

"Be thankful for a dollar these hard times!"

"Where you goin' to meet 'em?" asked someone.

Nell named the place.

"I wouldn't go there," said the first girl who had spoken, "I am afraid of the beds."

In the cafés where I worked these relations were entered upon with a little more circumstance although here also the girls frankly made dates with the patrons. One day a girl named Marietta danced up to me in the dressing room of a café and offered me some candy from an open box.

"Thanks, Marietta," I said, "that is good candy. Where did you get it?"

"I went out with a fellow last night," answered Marietta, "and he gave me this and a bunch of tulips and today he is going to buy me

that yellow sweater over in Carson Pirie's window. Say, he is all right."

"How do you manage it, Marietta?"

She told me in unquotable words and added, "I always keep two or three fellows on the string and I get all I can out of them. I never 'come through' unless I have to. Sometimes they get tired out and quit but I always get others. I have three now, this fellow I went out with last night (and I'm good to him) and John, he's a married man, and Jimmie, he's just a kid and hasn't got much money. I string them along."

Another girl told me that she had worked for years in the toughest places in the Loop and had gone out with men and had drunk with them. "But, when I was married," she said, "I was still a virtuous girl."

"But how do you manage it?" I asked again.

"It's easy," replied she, "always make them think that you intend to go the limit and then when it comes to the show down, give 'em the merry ha! ha! The damn fools will stand for it over and over again. Men are easy to string."

"I don't have nothin' to do with no young fellow," continued this same girl a little later, "it isn't worth it. Now an old fellow is worth stringin' along, you can pull his leg and get somethin' out of him but these young fellows ain't got any money."

The waitress is not always promiscuous in her relations. She often has but one lover. "George is my only fellow," she will say, "I don't go with nobody but him." And this is a situation that is recognized and tolerated by all waitresses but it is not prostitution. Such relations are mainly social. The girl earns her own living but the man takes her to places of amusement where she has an opportunity to wear her clothes. He may also give her money or articles of wearing apparel but these are in the nature of a gift rather than in payment of a service rendered. "The fellow that I'm going with buys my clothes," a girl will say. If she has any emotion about this, it is pride rather than shame. She needs the pretty clothes for her relation with her lover demands that she be beautiful for him. Therefore this material aid is natural. These women live in a different world from ours.

"Nobody helps me," another girl will say, "I scrimp along somehow. Not that I blame anybody else, I just don't want to, that's all." And the married waitress will say, "When I was a girl, I went around with the fellows just like all the rest do, but now it wouldn't be right."

One day a little girl named Fay told me that the night before a young man had followed her home and that after she was in the house he came to her door and slipped under it a card with his

name and address on one side and the following communication on the other:

"Dear little girl, I have been watching you for a long time and I want to meet you. I would like to meet you properly but since I can not, I have to take this way. You are so pretty. I am no confidence man nor kidnapper but just a plain lad that would like to meet a sweet little girl."

"I was fool enough to tell Joe" (her husband), remarked Fay regretfully, "and he said if he caught him following me again, he'd beat him up or set the police after him."

And here is presented the problem of the lonesome boy in the city. He can get acquainted with the waitress probably easier than with any other woman; he can talk to her as soon as he meets her and call her by her first name as soon as he learns what it is. In this way many love intimacies are formed that may or may not lead to marriage.

One day in a Greek restaurant in the Loop, the waitresses were all sitting at a counter eating lunch when the girl next to me said as she handed me a card, "What do you know about that!"

I looked at the card. It was a man's business card with his name, address, and telephone number upon it. "Why, what about it?" I asked, puzzled.

"Gee, you're green, kid!" said she. "It means that he wants me to call him up and make a date with him."

"Oh, I see!" said I, and then I remembered the card that had been left on my table at Foyle's Tea Shop. "Why, a man left one of my table one day but I thought he had dropped it by mistake and I put it into the pan with the dirty dishes."

"You'll learn, kiddo," said the girl briefly.

"Are you going to call him up?" I asked.

"Not that guy," she answered contemptuously. But her tone implied that she might have done so had he been another "guy." She tore the card into little bits and put the bits into her dirty coffee cup. And I thought to myself, "At least, it's a gentlemanly way of approaching the matter."

"No one ever says anything out of the way to me," I said to some girls once, "I expected they would, I had heard so much about what girls had to put up with."

"Of course no one would insult you," one of them answered. "Any one could tell from the looks of you that you wouldn't stand for it." From which I concluded that a woman is protected by her behavior even in a world of restaurants and waitresses. Of course there were certain men who paid every waitress silly compliments and there were plenty of glances and

smiles that might have been interpreted as a willingness upon the part of the man to receive a signal, but nothing more.

The city man is wary. He takes no chances of making a mistake. He waits for the signal from the girl. "When a fellow says anything to a girl, he knows darn well who he is sayin' it to," says the waitress. The city man has learned his lesson. He has had to pay so many times for being the pursuer of the innocent victim that he goes slow and sure. Owing to present day conditions of city life, the man is the one pursued, the woman the pursuer. His need is as great as ever and he shows plainly that he wishes to be pursued but he leaves the initiative to the woman. She dresses to attract him, he likes to be attracted and is willing to pay the price to the girl to whom he surrenders.

The waitress seems forced by the environment of the modern city to take the initiative in courtship and I was not a little surprised one evening when a man sat down at one of my tables and said, "If you didn't have on that ring, I'd come round some night and take you home in my automobile."

"It is too bad that I wear a ring," I answered jokingly, "but there is a pretty girl at the next station who hasn't one."

"Say," said he, as he laid down his knife and

fork, "I've been coming here every night for a week and you are the girl that I want to take out in that automobile."

He came again the next evening and brought his mother. I learned from her that he was from a little town in Wisconsin, and that he had just sold a small country hotel and come to the city to look around. This explained his direct method of attack. No doubt where he came from it was still customary for the male to take the initiative in affairs of the heart. He was not a city man.

The sex game in the waitress world is a dirty game. Even in the restaurants where the relations between patrons and waitresses was not actively sexual, there was the constant stimulation of dirty jokes and unclean conversation. Whether the place were the cheapest on South Pickering Street or in Usher Lane's exclusive tea-room for men, the uncleanness was always there.

One day in the dressing room at Lane's, a pretty girl was telling how much she had made that day in tips and some one said, "Tell us how you do it, Daisy."

"I do this to them under the table," answered Daisy, making a suggestive movement.

After Daisy had gone out, another girl spoke up and said, "Yes, she does, and she gets the

money. When she first came here to work, she had nothing and was glad to pick up an old pair of gloves out of the garbage can and wear them. Now she has everything, including a thousand dollars' worth of diamonds and a sealskin coat. She didn't earn them hashing at Lane's."

Sometimes I thought this uncleanness was the fault of the men, that they demanded this atmosphere of the women, and again I thought it was the fault of the women, but finally I concluded that it was the fault of neither but the outgrowth of a great fundamental human impulse common to both, which has become, by certain conditions of our city life, perverted into this unnatural expression.

The real goal of the waitress is domesticity. She is always hoping to marry and to marry a rich man. A girl at the Junior Alliance said to me one day, "The Stock Exchange Restaurant is the place to work. There is where you meet the rich men. A girl I know married a fellow she met when she was working there and now she has a grand flat on the North Side where she entertains her waitress friends at afternoon tea." And the girl's eyes were full of envy as she described the good fortune of her friend.

Because of the economic inefficiency of the men in her world, the waitress fails to realize her

ideal of domesticity and so she takes on a life of semi-prostitution. She is not, however, exploited nor driven into it, but goes with her eyes wide open.

CHAPTER XIX

THE PRICE OF INDEPENDENCE

In most parts of the United States a woman cannot obtain a teaching position if she is married. In many business offices employees who are married remove their wedding rings and retain the title of "Miss" so that they may keep their positions. If they do not, they may be asked to work for a lower salary. They are all girls and in this respect they are like the women of the stage. No such sacrifice is demanded of the waitress; married and unmarried, divorced or merely expectant, all come in on the same basis, for the waitress has gained economic independence.

This independence is not, however, wholly of her own choosing and it is quite likely that if the family had remained what it formerly was, the economic unit, the waitress would have been fairly well content to live the quiet and secluded life of the housewife. No doubt this life still has some charms even for the most emancipated, but under present economic conditions, the waitress has not

much choice and, there is no question that in spite of its hardships and difficulties, she does enjoy her freedom. She is beginning to accommodate herself to the new situation and gets many things out of the new life that she could not get out of marriage with the man with whom she would ordinarily be thrown.

She has better clothes for herself and for her children and she can keep the latter in school for a longer time. "I spend all I make on my kid," she will say, "if he don't have good clothes when he goes to school, the teacher won't pay no attention to him and he won't learn nothin' and the other kids will make fun of him. I stay up nights to wash and iron for him."

The divorced or the unmarried waitress would exchange her independence any time for marriage with a man who could support her in comfort but the young girls in the waitress group are placed in a position where they can have but little hope of finding men to marry who could and would maintain high standards of family life, largely because of economic reasons. There are, on the other hand, an indefinite number of men in the city who have no desire to marry and yet who desire sex relations and are willing to pay for them. So an adaptation is made which is not by any means an ideal one from the standpoint of the ultimate needs of society but which is per-

haps, in many cases, the best solution that can be worked out under present day conditions. Certainly the highest and strongest needs, the deep craving for love and comradeship cannot be satisfied by sexual relations of a transient nature.

There is nothing permanent in the life of the waitress. Certainly her profession offers her no security. It is a blind alley job with no future and it is a profession that is hard to stay in as she grows older. She does not, as she might, save her money with the idea of becoming the owner and manager of a restaurant, largely because such a thing has not entered her mind. And her relationships with men, even when they lead to marriage, offer no security.

Yet, in order to have children, security is necessary for women and the results disastrous when they do not have it. "I'm workin' so we can save enough so I can lay off in a year or two and have a kid," a young wife in this group will say, "you don't know you're livin' till you have a kid."

Since she cannot afford to have children and knows but little about birth control, she resorts to the common practice of abortion. A girl will come back to work after a short absence and announce with a cynical smile upon her ghastly white face, "It cost me thirty-five dollars for the job but, thank God, he says I'll never have any

more." Yet if motherhood did not interfere with wage earning ability, the waitress would gladly undertake its responsibilities. But with conditions such as they are, she will say, "Marriage is for kids. If you can't afford kids, have a 'friend' and be independent."

It is interesting to note that with economic independence the waitress has achieved a man's independence in her relations with men; she doesn't have to get married and she doesn't have to stay married very long. Almost every waitress has two or more husbands in the course of her life. Her relations with the male sex are free and in this freedom she has acquired the same standards as the men with whom she associates. Economic freedom has brought with it relations of all conventions. It has brought freedom of thought and of speech; the waitress talks about everything, men, marriage, God and religion with a freedom which we expect to find only in the male sex. She is a free soul, this waitress, and she often manifests her freedom by swearing like a trooper. The city is her frontier; she has found independence and her sense of freedom expresses itself in all the vulgarity and robustness of primitive life everywhere.

The women who "wait" live in all parts of the city, but whether North, South, or West, they come together in their work and in their organ-

izations, which, though primarily employment agencies, are also clubs for the promotion of the social life of the group. They know each other in the restaurant life but not often in their neighborhood life. I myself went out every day from my home, lived for a few hours the life of the waitress and almost never ran any risk of being discovered by my neighbors. The city made it possible for me to lead a double life with impunity.

The waitress does not live under the restraint of the public eye and the public does not criticise her. This emancipation has not, however, been won without cost; she gives up the idea of social appreciation which she would get in a neighborhood group and if she has a social standing in her neighborhood it is quite apart from that which she has with her occupational group. For example one evening when I was working in the Taylor Restaurant, one of the girls came up to me and said: "Let me hide behind you, Fannie, I'm so ashamed! Do you see that man and his wife at that table, they are my neighbors and they don't know I work. We pay thirty-seven-fifty for our flat and we live in a nice neighborhood and they think we are somebody. If they see that I work in a restaurant, what will they think! Oh, I'm so shamed!"

When I went to work in the office downtown,

after I had completed my career as a waitress, I found much that was new but nothing that was startling, nothing that could not be interpreted in terms of experience. The little office girl, I soon discovered, is bourgeoisie middle class, bound by the same conventions and actuated by the same motives as the housewives in the little western city where I had lived for many years, and she will become, if she is fortunate, one of those women who live in apartments and come running with a smile to greet the husband when he rings the bell at evening time. She will live the narrow, shut-in existence of the home cooking woman in utter ignorance of life in its nakedness and crudity.

The waitress is different; she is ignorant and coarse, but genial. She is often unwashed and her teeth are unfilled but she knows life and she is not afraid of life which is to her big, dramatic, brutal but vivid, full of color. She has to be sure her dull moments but she is very busy and not given to brooding. Even when she is a grandmother, her life is still full, full to overflowing with excitement and the fierce joy of struggle. It is the struggle that keeps her young. To go out into the world and grab from it the right to live in spite of the competition of youth is vastly more interesting than to make weekly pilgrimages to the beauty parlor in the vain attempt to get rid